NATION

'Bills can't be subjected to Guv's whim'

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Service sector touches 15-yr high in Aug but inflation intensifies

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Hockey Super4s: Korea holds India to a 2-2 draw

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DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

ساڈہ روزنامہ بنگلور

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Achhe din? Govt slashes GST to 5% & 18%

12 & 28% GST dropped in major restructuring; 40% on sin/luxury items; Insurance exempted

NEW DELHI, 3 SEPT

GST tax rates on common use items ranging from hair oil to corn flakes, TVs, and personal health and life insurance policies were slashed after the all-powerful GST Council on Wednesday approved a complete overhaul of the tangled Goods and Services Tax regime.

Almost all personal use items will see rate cuts as the government looks to boost domestic spending and cushion the economic blow of the US tariffs.

Briefing reporters after a marathon daylong GST Council meeting, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said all decisions were taken unanimously, with no disagreement with any state.

The panel approved simplifying the goods and services tax (GST) from the current four slabs -- 5, 12, 18 and 28 per cent -- to a two-rate structure -- 5 and 18 per cent.

Meanwhile, EVs will continue to be charged at 5 per cent GST.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS:

Two primary GST slabs:

- 5 per cent for essential and mass-consumption items.
- 18 per cent for standard goods and services.
- A special sin/luxury tax rate of 40 per cent will apply to products deemed harmful or high-end luxury goods.

All revised GST rates (except for tobacco products and cigarettes) will be effective from 22 September.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman during the 56th GST Council meeting in New Delhi on Wednesday **PHOTO: PTI**

Items moved to 5 per cent slab (down from 12 per cent or 18 per cent):

- Healthcare: Several life-saving drugs , diagnostic kits, spectacles/goggles (from 28 per cent).
- Daily-use items: Hair oil, toilet soaps, shampoos, toothbrushes, bicycles, tableware, kitchenware, household articles.
- Packaged foods: Namkeen, pasta, instant noodles, sauces, coffee, cornflakes, butter, ghee.
- Renewable energy equipment: Solar panels, bioenergy plants, PV cells, windmills, solar heaters.
- Agricultural machinery: Soil harvesters, fodder machines, composting units.
- Handicrafts and raw materials: Handicrafts, marble, granite blocks, intermediate leather goods.
- Natural products: 12 specified biopesticides, natural menthol.

Nil GST

- Life-saving drugs including cancer ones.
- Life insurance and health insurance policies.
- Ultra-high temperature (UHT) milk.
- Chena/paneer.
- All varieties of Indian breads (roti, paratha, naan, etc).

—PTI

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2 Telangana students killed in UK car crash

LONDON, 3 SEPT

Two Indian students from Telangana were killed and five others seriously injured in a two-car collision at the Rayleigh Spur roundabout in Essex, southeast England, early Monday. Chaitanya Tarre, 23, died at the scene, while Rishi Teja Rapolu, 21, succumbed to injuries in hospital. Both were part of a group returning from a Ganesha Visarjan celebration. Two drivers from east London, aged 23 and 24, were arrested on suspicion of causing death and serious injury by dangerous driving. They have been released on bail until 20 November . *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

India to get more S-400s from Russia

NEW DELHI, 3 SEPT

India is expected to begin receiving the remaining two S-400 Triumf air defence systems from Russia starting in 2026, with another unit to follow in 2027, according to official sources. These are part of the Rs 39,000 crore deal for five S-400 units signed in 2018. Three units have already been delivered between 2021 and 2023 and are deployed in Adampur (Punjab), the Eastern sector, and the Western sector. The new systems would support India's ambitious 'Sudarshan Chakra' defence project — a multi-layered security grid similar to Israel's Iron Dome, integrating surveillance and cyber defence. *—PTI*

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Cabinet approves ₹1,500 cr scheme for minerals

NEW DELHI, 3 SEPT

The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved a Rs 1,500-crore incentive scheme to promote recycling of critical minerals. The move aims to build domestic recycling capacity for recovering key minerals from e-waste, lithium-ion battery scrap, and catalytic converters in end-of-life vehicles. This scheme falls under the Rs 34,300-crore National Critical Mineral Mission (NCMM), launched to enhance India's self-reliance and strengthen clean energy supply chains.

The NCMM includes a Rs 16,300-crore government allocation, with public sector enterprises contributing Rs 18,000 crore. *—PTI*

Whistleblower sent to jail till 6 Sept in D'sthala case

MANGALURU, 3 SEPT

A court on Wednesday extended the police custody of the whistleblower, who had alleged multiple murders, rapes, and burials in Dharmasthala until 6 September.

He was arrested on 23 August by the Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the charges in connection with the Dharmasthala case.

Following the end of his 12-day custody, the accused appeared before Judge Vijayendra HT at a Belthangady court on Wednesday. *—PTI*

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Trump says India kills US with tariffs

NEW YORK/ WASHINGTON, 3 SEPT

US President Donald Trump accused India of imposing some of the highest tariffs in the world, claiming that under pressure from his administration, New Delhi has now offered the US "no tariffs".

In a radio interview with The Scott Jennings Show, Trump said, "China kills us with tariffs. India kills us with tariffs. Brazil kills us." He added, "I understood tariffs better than any human being... and now with my tariffs, they were all dropping them. India was the most highly tariffed nation... they've offered me no tariffs anymore."

Trump argued that without his tariff policies, such offers would never have materialised. He defended tariffs as essential to ensuring economic strength and countering trade imbalances.

Speaking later at the White House, Trump claimed the US gets along well with India, but described the bilateral trade relationship as "one-sided" for years, with India charging "tremendous tariffs" while flooding the US with its products. He cited Harley Davidson as an example, saying the company faced a 200 per cent tariff in India and was forced to set up a plant there to avoid duties.

> **We are witnessing significant and far-reaching changes on the global strategic landscape. We're also seeing a lot of volatility on the global economic landscape and together they make a very powerful case for India, EU and Germany to work closely with each other**
>
> -S Jaishankar, EAM in Germany

Trump also alleged that India buys most of its oil and military equipment from Russia and very little from the US. His administration recently imposed a total of 50 per cent tariffs on India – 25 per centreciprocal tariffs and an additional 25 per cent over purchases of Russian oil, effective 27 August.

On Wednesday, Trump also hinted at a phase two and three against India for buying Russian oil. *—PTI*

Rain misery: 37 dead in Punjab; Delhi drowns as Yamuna swells

NEW DELHI, 3 SEPT

Relentless rains and severe flooding continue to wreak havoc across north India, with Punjab and Delhi among the worst affected. Swollen rivers, cloudbursts, and landslides have disrupted daily life, damaged infrastructure, and claimed dozens of lives.

In Punjab, 37 people have died, and over 3.55 lakh people across 1,400 villages have been impacted. The state government has declared Punjab a disaster-affected state, with all 23 districts hit by the worst flooding since 1988. Over 19,500 people have been evacuated, and nearly 3.75 lakh acres of farmland submerged, resulting in massive crop losses. In Delhi, the Yamuna River rose to 207 metres, submerging low-lying areas and forcing hundreds into temporary shelters. Markets like Majnu ka Tila and Yamuna Bazaar have gone underwater.

People carry their belongings across the Mayur Vihar Yamuna flood plain, in New Delhi, Wednesday, **PHOTO: PTI**

At Nigambodh Ghat, Delhi's largest cremation ground, cremations have been suspended after floodwaters entered the premises. *—PTI*

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Munirathna gets clean chit in rape case

BENGALURU, 3 SEPT

RR Nagar MLA Munirathna has been given a clean chit by the Special Investigation Team (SIT) in the RMC Yard gangrape case, due to lack of evidence.

The case, which sent shockwaves through Karnataka's political landscape, began when a woman filed a complaint at RMC Yard Police Station alleging gang-] rape by multiple individuals, including Munirathna. She claimed she was forced to consume sleeping pills before being assaulted.

However, the SIT investigation revealed inconsistencies between her statement and medical reports. Despite the drugging claims, medical tests showed no traces of sleeping pills. Moreover, investigators found no physical or corroborative evidence linking the MLA directly to the alleged crime.

The SIT submitted a "B Report" to the special court, effectively stating that there is no prosecutable evidence against Munirathna.

Meanwhile, the MLA has approached the Karnataka High Court seeking quashing of charges. The court granted him interim protection from arrest. The special court is yet to decide on accepting or rejecting the SIT's report. While the SIT's findings offer temporary relief to the MLA, the case remains open pending judicial review. *—Salar News*

K'taka cuts general quota to 44%

NEW DELHI, 3 SEPT

The Karnataka government on Wednesday issued an order prescribing a new reservation roster, which clarifies that the quantum of reservation for SC/STs and OBCs in the State for jobs and education stood at 56 per cent.

While the reservation for Scheduled Castes (SC) is 17 per cent, it is 7 per cent for Scheduled Tribes (ST) and 32 per cent for Other Backward Classes (OBC).

The general merit category will have a 44 per cent share.

The new reservation roster under which all government recruitment must happen, has been issued following the Congress government recently deciding on internal reservation, slicing up the 17 per cent reservation matrix given to 101 SCs.

The internal reservation provided among SCs is: Group A (SC Left/Madigas) and Group B (SC Right / Holeya) reservation of 6 per cent each, and Group C (Banjara, Bhovi, Korma, Korcha and most backward communities) 5 per cent.

Though the previous BJP government's decision in 2022-23 to increase SC reservation from 15 to 17 per cent and for ST reservation from 3 to 7 per cent had taken the overall reservation in the state to 56 per cent, breaching the 50 per cent cap, the issue of internal reservation was not settled at that time.

Notably, this comes ahead of the State's caste survey, scheduled to begin during Dasara.

The decision is expected to cause a massive stir in the State. *—PTI*

2ND CASE IN A WEEK

City woman dies by suicide over dowry harassment

BENGALURU, 3 SEPT

A 28-year-old woman was found hanging at her house here, following which her husband was arrested on charges of abetment to suicide and dowry harassment, police said.

The woman, N Poojashri, a bank cashier, allegedly died by suicide on 30 August, hanging herself from a wardrobe hook at her residence in Bagalagunte when her husband and daughter were not at home, police said.

Poojashri had married J Nandish, 32, who works at a private company, three years ago. The couple have a one-year-old daughter, police said.

Citing a preliminary investigation, a senior police officer said Poojashri was allegedly harassed by her husband and mother-in-law for dowry.

Nandish also allegedly assaulted her when she confronted him about his relationship with another woman. The couple often quarrelled over these issues, police said.

Based on a complaint lodged by the woman's mother a case was registered against Nandish, his mother Shantamma, and three others on charges of abetment to suicide and dowry harassment. Nandish was arrested on 31 August and remanded in judicial custody.

Last week, another case of alleged dowry death was reported in the city when a 27-year-old woman was found dead at her residence in Suddaguntepalya. Her family claimed she was "harassed over her skin colour and short stature." *—PTI*

XI, PUTIN, AND KIM LEAD THE UNITY PARADE AT CHINA

BEIJING, 3 SEPT

Chinese President Xi Jinping, Russian President Vladimir Putin, and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un walked together at a military parade in Beijing, marking the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II. The trio, joined by leaders from 26 nations largely seen as adversaries of the US, watched ranks of Chinese troops and weaponry. Also, present were Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian and Belarus's Alexander Lukashenko, as China seemed to send a clear message to the West. *—PTI*

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PHOTO: PTI

Cong MLA creates flutter with 'delivery' remarks

KARWAR, 3 SEPT

Senior Congress MLA R V Deshpande's terse reply to a woman journalist about a super specialty hospital in Uttara Kannada district has triggered a controversy. During a visit to Joida in Uttara Kannada district, the journalist asked former Minister Deshpande when the people of the region will get a super specialty hospital. To this, he said, "Do you have any delivery? Tell me, and I'll get it done for you." The saffron party hit out at Deshpande, who once won the best MLA of the year award. "The INC's pattern of disrespecting women continues. .... comment to a female journalist," the party said in a post on X. It termed the remark "a culture of misogyny". *—PTI*

Yadgir cop and his GESCOM brother 'rape' aunt for 7yrs

YADGIR, 3 SEPT

Two youths have allegedly been raping their aunt for seven years and threatening her life. Shockingly, the accused are a police constable and a GESCOM employee. The incidents took place within the jurisdiction of Gurmitkal Police Station in Yadgir district. Ramesh, a traffic police constable at Yadgir station, along with his brother Lakshman, an employee of GESCOM, allegedly committed continuous sexual assault on their uncle's wife. In addition, the accused have also been threatening this victim's daughter and sending her obscene WhatsApp messages from when she was 14 years old. The victim woman has filed a complaint at the Yadgir Women's Police Station and an investigation is underway. ***—Salar News***

PHOTO: PTI

Man crushed to death by boulder in Ballari

MALUR, 3 SEPT

A 44-year-old man was crushed to death by a boulder in a Ballari in a stone cutting unit, while another worker sustained injuries. Manjunath, a resident of Hunasikote village was killed on the spot at a facility in Malur taluk. The incident took place on Tuesday night when some labourers, including Manjunath, were trying to remove the mud that had accumulated near the boulder meant for cutting, which is when stone slipped down. Such incidents have become a routine feature in the quarries operating in Ballari areas. On 17 March, Venkatesh, 60, succumbed to injuries he sustained when a huge boulder fell on him when he was working at a quarry in Makarahalli. ***—Salar News***

Man burnt alive in Mysuru scrap shop blaze

MYSURU, 3 SEPT

A 60-year-old man was burnt alive after a fire broke out in his scrap shop on Khaji Road in Mandi Mohalla on Wednesday. The deceased, identified as Siddanaiah, was trapped inside the shop, and his half-burnt body was later recovered among the scrap materials. Despite rushing to the scene and extinguishing the blaze, police and fire brigade personnel were unable to save him. At the time of the incident, Siddanaiah's wife Puttamma and granddaughter Lakshmi had stepped out of the shop, which is attached to their home. The Mandi Police have registered a case, and an investigation is underway to determine the cause of the fire. ***—Salar news***

CM gives Anjanadri Hill major development boost

Directs Finance Dept to expedite release of Rs 200 crore

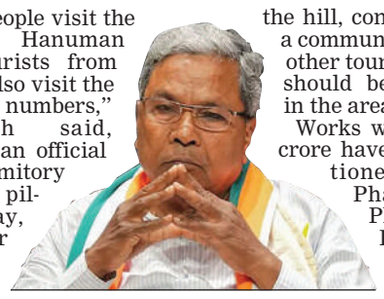
BENGALURU, 3 SEPT

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Wednesday instructed officials to develop Anjanadri Hill in Koppal district. Located near Hampi and overseeing the Tungabhadra River, Anjanadri Hill is considered as the birthplace of Lord Hanuman.

Siddaramaiah emphasised its mythological, spiritual, and tourism significance.

The Chief Minister, who chaired a Wednesday meeting on the development of the hill and surrounding areas, discussed with ministers concerned and officials the provision of necessary facilities for the elderly to reach the summit, as well as the construction of a circumambulation route.

The Anjanadri Hill in Koppal district is considered by many to be the birthplace of Lord Hanuman. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah noted that lakhs of people visited the hill every year ***PHOTO: ANI***



"Lakhs of people visit the hill during Hanuman Jayanti. Tourists from North India also visit the area in large numbers," Siddaramaiah said, according to an official release. "Dormitory facilities for pilgrims to stay, stairs for senior devotees to climb the hill, construction of a community hall, and other tourist facilities should be developed in the area,"

Works worth Rs 200 crore have been sanctioned under Phase-1 and Phase-2, with Rs 10 crore released so far, the statement said.

"Additional grant will have to be provided by the Finance Department to release the remaining funds," the release noted.

Due to a shortage of government land for the sanctioned projects, the purchase of 77.28 acres of private land was proposed, but could not be completed due to a lack of grants.

"Therefore, the Finance Department should provide the necessary funds to acquire a total of 101.30 acres of private land, including the additional land," it said, noting the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model. Since most of the sanctioned works fall under the forest department's jurisdiction, the CM directed officials to secure the required NOC to carry out the development activities. *—PTI*

'GOVT IS WATCHING'

No foreign preachers allowed: HM tells Milad organisers

BENGALURU, 3 SEPT

Home Minister G Parameshwara reminded the Joint Milad Committee, which will be hosting the International Milad-un-Nabi Conference in the City on 5 September, that foreigners are prohibited from participating or preaching in religious events in India.

According to the organisers, thousands of people are likely to participate in the event scheduled to take place at the Palace Grounds here.

The organisers have invited Sufi saint Habeeb Umar Bin Hafeez of Yemen, along with Grand Mufti of India Shaikh Abubacker Ahmed Musliyar.

The Minister said police would monitor the programme to ensure compliance of the law.

"We (police) have brought to the notice of the organisers who organised the event that there is no scope in the Indian laws for foreigners to preach or take part in the religious events..." Parameshwara said.

Police have instructed the organisers not to invite foreign religious scholars, he said.

The Foreign Regional Registration Office (FRRO) will be tracking the event, the Minister added.

Preachers from several Arab nations, such as Saudi Arabia, are known to attend the event. *—PTI*

Banu receives official invite to inaugurate Mysuru Dasara

MYSURU, 3 SEPT

International Booker Prize winner Banu Mushtaq has been officially invited to inaugurate the world-famous Mysuru Dasara festival this year. The Mysuru District Administration extended the formal invitation on Wednesday at her residence in Hassan.

District Commissioner Lakshmikant Reddy, who also serves as the Dasara Special Officer, personally visited Banu Mushtaq and honoured her with a traditional shale and peta --shawl and turban, before delivering the official invite.

The invitation ceremony was attended by Zilla Panchayat CEO S. Yukesh Kumar, Additional DC Dr P Shivaraju, Chamundeshwari Temple Development Authority Secretary MJ Roopa, and members of the Dasara welcome committee.

The grand inauguration is scheduled for 22 September atop the Chamundi Hill, where Banu Mushtaq will formally launch the ten-day festivities. *—Salar News*

District Commissioner Lakshmikant Reddy formally invites author Banu Mushtaq to inaugurate the Dasara festival ***PHOTO: SALAR***

Bhovi corp head quits amid graft charges

SHIVAMOGGA, 3 SEPT

Bhovi Development Corporation Chairperson S Ravi Kumar said he will resign in the wake of corruption allegations against him.

However, Kumar denied the charges and alleged that there was a conspiracy against him, which had conveyed to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah.

"I told him that it was a conspiracy against me. I will resign to avoid embarrassment to the government and the party," Kumar said on Wednesday in Shivamogga.

Leader of the Bhovi community, Venkatesh Mourya, had recently released a video which purports to show a conversation between Kumar and a woman broker regarding commission from the money given to beneficiaries of the corporation. The woman says she collected money from beneficiaries and hands it over to Kumar.

Kumar denounced the clip and alleged that AI had been used to distort certain facts. Claiming that all work in the Corporation was carried out transparently, he demanded an investigation into the matter.

The incident has revived memories of the Valmiki Nigam scam, in which Minister B Nagendra had resigned following similar claims. *—Salar News*

BJP MLA booked for comparing woman SP to a dog

DAVANGERE, 3 SEPT

An FIR was registered against BJP MLA BP Harish on Wednesday for making "insulting" remarks against a woman IPS officer.

The MLA from Harihar, while addressing a press conference, had made remarks comparing Davangere Superintendent of Police Uma Prashanth to a pet waiting at the gate.

He had said, "If you see the way the SP behaves -- as a MLA if I go to a meeting, she does not acknowledge properly, but for those from the (Congress') Shamanuru family she will wait for an hour near the gate, behaving like a Pomeranian dog at their house."

A case was registered under the relevant sections of the BNS. *—PTI*

DKS: Decision on Upper Krishna project in 2-3 days

BENGALURU, 3 SEPT

Deputy Chief Minister **DK Shivakumar** on Wednesday said that the State government was committed to Upper Krishna project and added that a final decision on the implementation would be taken in the next two-three days.

Speaking to reporters after holding a meeting at Vidhana Soudha on implementation of Upper Krishna Project Stage 3, he said, "We have made an appeal to the Union Jal Shakthi minister and he has assured of holding a meeting soon regarding this."

"We held several rounds of meeting on land acquisition, rehabilitation, redevelopment and compensation. The previous Basavaraj Bommai government had fixed a compensation of Rs 24 lakh per acre for irrigated land and Rs 20 lakh per acre for arid land, but the farmers hadn't agreed," he said, noting that farmers had protested about the issue.

"The Courts have ruled that farmers need to be compensated a higher amount. But it has been decided that higher compensation can't be given.... This issue will be discussed in Thursday's Cabinet meet," he said. *—Salar News*

The Soujanya case has gained renewed public scrutiny after the Dharmasthala mass burial allegations ***PHOTO: X***

Uday appears before SIT in Soujanya case

MANGALURU/ BENGALURU, 3 SEPT

Uday Jain, one of the prime accused in the Soujanya rape and murder case, appeared before the Special Investigation Team (SIT) at its Belthangady office on Wednesday.

Soujanya, a 17-year-old student, was allegedly raped and murdered in Dharmasthala in 2012. The case resurfaced after the mass burials allegations. The SIT is now actively re-investigating the matter.

Uday, along with Mallik Jain and Dheeraj Kella, had previously come under scrutiny during the initial probes by CBI and CID, although none of them were named in the original FIR. They were subjected to lie detector tests, and investigations reportedly found no evidence of their involvement at that time.

Speaking to press, Uday stated: "Our names were never in the FIR. Still, we were dragged into the case due to a conspiracy.... I don't even know why the SIT has summoned me again. They've also called Mallik Jain and Dheeraj Kella."

Meanwhile, Minister Priyank Kharge on Wednesday challenged the BJP leaders to make their conversation with Soujanya's mother Kusumavati public.

The BJP leaders led by State President BY Vijayendra called on Soujanya's family during the 'Dharmasthala Chalo' rally on Monday.

"Why did the BJP Karnataka unit leaders remain silent without responding to Kusumavati's statement? Your own party says that she has made money using the name of Soujanya and has built such a big house?" Kharge said. *—Salar News with Agencies*

A NEW ERA

The Greater Bengaluru Authority board was unveiled at the head office in City, replacing the BBMP sign on Wednesday ***PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD***

Govt forms panel to probe delayed NICE road project

BENGALURU, 3 SEPT

Home Minister G Parameshwara said the State cabinet has constituted a sub-committee to examine the long-delayed Bengaluru-Mysuru NICE Road project.

The project, initiated in 2008 by the Nandi Infrastructure Corridor Enterprises (NICE), was expected to provide a link between Bengaluru and Mysuru. However, Parameshwara noted that despite years of work, only 42km of the peripheral road has been completed so far.

"The Cabinet has constituted a sub-committee to look into the affairs of the project taken up by the NICE.... Still there is no clarity.... Land has been handed over to this company," he said. "(NICE) had violated the agreement several times and blamed the government for not handing over the land." *—ANI*

COBRA EXPLOITATION

Khandre orders probe into Agumbe encroachment

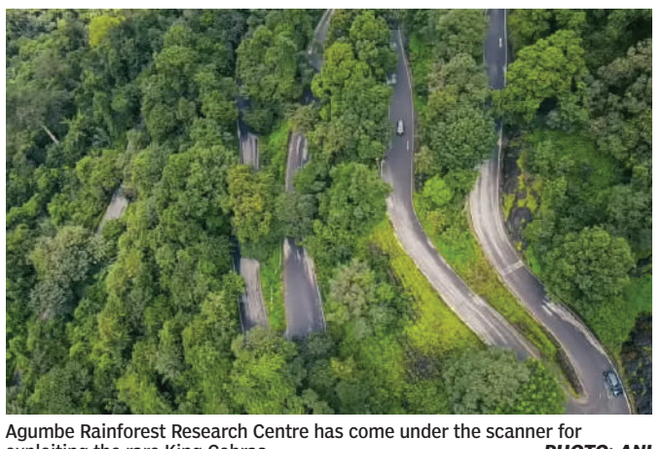
SHIVAMOGGA, 3 SEPT

Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre has instructed the Chief Conservator of Forests to investigate and submit a report on the complaints against the Agumbe Rainforest Research Centre in Thirthahalli in Shivamogga district, including encroachment of forest land and illegal construction of buildings in forest areas and illegal photoshoots.

A case recently came to light where King Cobras were allegedly kept in captivity and offered to wildlife photographers for illegal photo and video shoots in the name of conservation.

Social activist Dinesh Kallahalli, who lodged a complaint with the principal Chief Conservator of forests, said videos and photographs of King Cobras can generate revenue worth lakhs of rupees.

Recently, the Agumbe Rainforest Research Station (ARRS) had also invited wildlife filmmaker Pradeep Hegde and allowed him to capture the mating, nesting, egg-laying, and hatching of King Cobras.



Agumbe Rainforest Research Centre has come under the scanner for exploiting the rare King Cobras ***PHOTO: ANI***

Though locals informed the forest department, the reptiles were allegedly hidden by the time the officials arrived.

Kallahalli pointed out that permission for research is usually granted only for a specific duration, but here, year-round photography is being conducted in the name of research. He further alleged that King Cobras are being exploited under the guise of conservation and protection.

Khandre said that the team has been asked to submit a comprehensive report within 10 days, with recommendations for action against negligent officials and those found guilty of violations.

Kallahalli also filed a complaint, alleging that the AARS illegally purchased land in Tallur village, in Someshwara Wildlife Sanctuary. *—Salar News*

PHOTO: ANI

Only 3 foreigners got citizenship under CAA: Himanta

PRAYAGRAJ, 3 SEPT

Only three foreigners have received citizenship of India in Assam under the CAA against 12 applications, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Wednesday. Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of an official function here, he said it is futile to discuss the CAA on the backdrop of such a low number of applications against the apprehension that lakhs of foreigners would get citizenship in Assam. The CM, however, did not share the details related to the origin of the new Indian citizen."We have received only 12 applications so far. The remaining nine applications are under consideration," he said. A 50-year-old man, Dulon Das, was the first person in Assam to receive citizenship under the CAA in August 2024. *—PTI*

WB BJP Chief held for 'vandalising' Cong headquarters

KOLKATA, 3 SEPT

BJP leader Rakesh Singh has been arrested for allegedly vandalising the Congress' West Bengal unit headquarters here. Singh, who had been absconding since the attack on the Bidhan Bhavan in central Kolkata on 29 August, was apprehended from a housing complex in the city's Tangra area. Several individuals in connection with the incident. Police also interrogated Singh's son Shivam Singh was interrogated and taken in to custody. While in hiding, Singh released a video clip threatening the police and launched a verbal attack on West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee. The BJP and Congress supporters raised slogans against each other as Singh was brought to the Sealdah court complex. *—PTI*

Man posing as Shah's nephew denied bail

NEW DELHI, 3 SEPT

The Delhi High Court has refused bail to Ajay Kumar Nayyar, accused of cheating a businessman of Rs 3.9 crore by posing as the nephew of Union Home Minister Amit Shah. Justice Girish Kathpalia dismissed the plea, citing the serious nature of allegations, possible life imprisonment charges under Sections 467, 471 and 120B IPC, and Nayyar's past record. According to the prosecution, Nayyar posed as 'Ajay Shah' and promised a Rs 90 crore government tender for leather supplies to renovate President's estate. The complainant allegedly paid Rs 3.9 crore after being shown forged demand drafts. He was arrested in December 2021. Prosecutors opposed bail, saying he faces additional charges and is allegedly linked to a similar case.*—PTI*

HC asks Moitra, ex-partner to settle pet's custody row

NEW DELHI, 3 SEPT

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday sought TMC MP Mahua Moitra's response to a plea filed by advocate Jai Anant Dehadrai against an order restraining him from publicising the issue related to custody battle over a pet dog. Justice Manoj Jain issued notice to Moitra on the appeal and asked the parties why don't they sit together and sort out the issue out of court. The two were reportedly in a relationship but parted ways later. The court was informed that the suit filed before the trial court by Moitra sought joint custody of the pet Rottweiler "Henry". Dehadrai challenged the trial court's order directing to "ensure the present proceedings shall not be publicised". He called it a "sweeping gag order" and said he was restrained from being able to disclose the existence of Moitra's suit to anyone in public. *—PTI*

M'rashtra OBC leaders sulk as Marathas get Kunbi status

Bhujbal skips Cabinet meet, to challenge Maratha quota GR

MUMBAI, 3 SEPT

Maharashtra Minister and prominent OBC leader Chhagan Bhujbal on Wednesday skipped a cabinet meeting and later expressed displeasure over a government order on granting Kunbi status to eligible Marathas for quota, indicating he will mount a legal challenge.

A day after ending his fast in Mumbai and claiming victory in his fight seeking reservation in jobs and education for Marathas under the other backward class category, activist Manoj Jarange expressed confidence about his community members getting quota benefits following Tuesday's government resolution (GR) on issuance of Kunbi (OBC) caste certificates to them.

The emotive Maratha quota issue appears to be far from settled after Jarange's latest agitation as Bhujbal openly expressed his displeasure over the GR issued by the government for expediting the grant of Kunbi caste certificates to eligible Marathas, which will pave the way for community members to get reservation.

Meanwhile, Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde said CM Devendra Fadnavis will talk to Bhujbal and explain the facts to him.

Bhujbal will be placated after knowing the facts, he added.

Maharashtra Minister Chhagan Bhujbal *PHOTO: PTI*

- In another outreach to OBCs, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis will on Thursday meet protesters in Nagpur taking part in a chain hunger strike

On Bhujbal skipping the cabinet meeting, Jarange said, "That means he is a clever leader. It also means the Maratha community has succeeded in getting reservation."

OBC activist Laxman Hake, however, claimed the government has no right to accept the demand for providing Kunbi certificates to Marathas and warned OBCs will take to the streets against the decision.

In another outreach to OBCs, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis will on Thursday meet protesters in Nagpur taking part in a chain hunger strike over apprehension Marathas would be given reservation under the Other Backward Classes (OBC) category, a local BJP leader said.

Meanwhile, BJP MLC Parinay Fuke said the Fadnavis-led government issued the GR on Maratha quota after taking all members of the cabinet into confidence, and claimed no OBC leader was disappointed with the order. *—PTI*

125T garbage collected from protest areas

More than 125 metric tonnes of garbage was collected from Azad Maidan and its surrounding areas in south Mumbai during the five-day-long Maratha quota agitation, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) said on Wednesday.

The nearby Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (CSMT) and area around the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) headquarter building virtually became the camping sites of these protesters, many of whom were seen cooking, consuming food, sleeping and even bathing on pavements and roads. All this generated large amounts of garbage at the protest site and the surrounding areas. Heaps of garbage, including leftover food items, mineral water bottles, wrappers, paper plates and cups were seen in the area. *—PTI*

'ACTS OF CRIMINALITY'

Khera's wife has 2 voter IDs: BJP flays RaGa over 'vote theft'

NEW DELHI, 3 SEPT

The BJP on Wednesday alleged that Congress leader **Pawan Khera**'s wife also has two active voter ID cards, and said party leader Rahul Gandhi cannot extricate himself from such "acts of criminality within his own ranks".

This comes a day after the ruling BJP alleged that Khera had two voter IDs and Gandhi was running a campaign against voter-roll revision in Bihar to "protect and hide" his party's theft of votes.

There was no immediate response from the Congress, Khera or his wife Kota Neelima, who is also a party leader in Telangana.

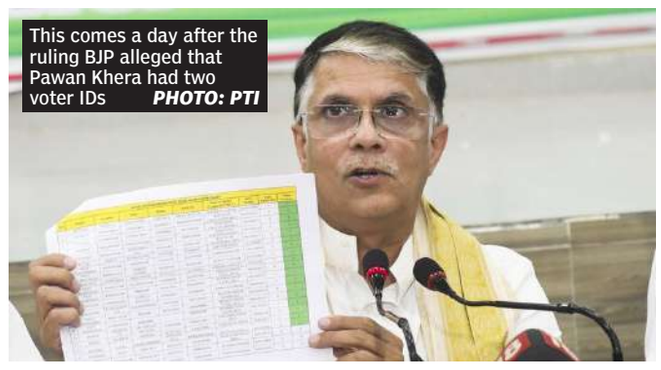
"BJP IT department head Amit Malviya said, "Those indulging in 'Vote Chori' are the very ones maligning common citizens for exercising their democratic rights and weakening our institutions."

Malviya also demanded that the Election Commission launch a probe into matter.

BJP national spokesperson Shazia Ilmi said the Congress, which calls itself a 'mohabbat ki dukan', is actually running "farziwada aur fareb ka bazaar' (a market of fraud and deceit).

BJP has launched a counter-attack on Congress after Gandhi asserted on Monday his party will soon come out with a "hydrogen bomb" of revelations about "vote chori" and that Prime Minister Narendra Modi will not be able to "show his face" to the country afterwards.

Malviya alleged that the "rot" goes back to the top - when Sonia Gandhi, an Italian, managed to get her name included in the voter list in 1980. *—PTI*



This comes a day after the ruling BJP alleged that Pawan Khera had two voter IDs *PHOTO: PTI*

After suspension from BRS, Kavitha resigns as MLC

HYDERABAD, 3 SEPT

A day after her suspension from KCR-led BRS, senior leader K Kavitha on Wednesday announced her resignation from the party and trained her guns against cousin and former minister T Harish Rao.

Kavitha, daughter of party founder and former Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao(KCR), also quitted from the post of Member of the Legislative Council, indicating there was "pressure" on her father to act against her.

The former MP charged Harish Rao with having a "tacit understanding" with Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy.

Kavitha said her brother and BRS working President KT Rama Rao should be "careful" about the alleged conspiracies by Harish Rao.

She claimed that her brother did not back her when a "malicious campaign" was launched against her.

In the 2018 assembly elections, Harish Rao gave additional funding to 20-25 MLAs in addition to the funding provided by the party. He also sent money to defeat KT Rama Rao in Sircilla constituency in the 2009 assembly polls, she alleged.

Kavitha charged that the CBI probe announced against KCR over alleged irregularities in the Kaleshwaram irrigation project was due to "corruption" of cousins Rao and Santosh Kumar.

Meanwhile, Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy dismissed allegations by Kavitha of a "tacit understanding" with Harish Rao, saying he "does not need to be involved with such dirty people."

He added that he "should not be dragged into the BRS family disputes."

Addressing an event in his native Mahabubnagar district, Reddy accused the BRS (without naming the party) of "fostering an environment in which rival parties could not survive." *—PTI*

Suspended BRS leader Kavitha addresses a press conference in Hyderabad Telangana on Wednesday *PHOTO: PTI*

India, Germany must unite amid global changes: EAM

NEW DELHI, 3 SEPT

The volatility on global economic and geopolitical landscape has made a "very compelling" case for India and Germany to expand ties and the proposed free trade deal between New Delhi and European Union should be firmed up soon as it will help stabilise the world economy, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Wednesday, against the backdrop of Washington's trade and tariff war.

Following his talks with German foreign minister Johann Wadephul, Jaishankar also welcomed Berlin's resolve to double trade with India and said the focus of the deliberations was to boost bilateral cooperation in areas of trade, defence and security, green hydrogen, semiconductor manufacturing, future technologies, clean energy, education and mobility.

In an important announcement, the external affairs minister also said it was agreed to grant gratis visas for short-term school and college visits to further promote student exchanges, adding both sides resolved to expand scientific collaborations and research as well as people-to-people exchanges.

Jaishankar also thanked Germany for its support to India's fight against terrorism.

The external affairs minister said both sides held detailed discussions on expanding ties in areas of trade, defence and security, green hydrogen, semiconductor, future technologies, clean energy and mobility.

The external affairs minister, on defence cooperation between the two sides, said it was broadly agreed to expand bilateral military engagements. *—PTI*

RAPE-ACCUSED AAP MLA STILL ON RUN FROM COPS

PATIALA, 3 SEPT

Punjab AAP MLA Harmeet Singh Pathanmajra remained absconding on Wednesday after escaping police custody amid gunfire and stone-pelting by supporters in Haryana's Karnal district. The first-time Sanour legislator was arrested at a relative's residence in Dabri village but used the ensuing chaos to flee.

Police said Pathanmajra and his supporters escaped in two SUVs, injuring a policeman attempting to stop them. One accomplice, Balwinder Singh, was arrested with three weapons, and a Fortuner SUV was seized. The Anti-Gangster Task Force and other police units are pursuing the MLA.

An FIR registered on 1 September charges Pathanmajra with rape, cheating, and criminal intimidation.

In a video from an undisclosed location, Pathanmajra denied firing at police, claiming he fled fearing a "fake encounter." He accused a "Delhi lobby" within AAP of targeting him and urged fellow Punjab legislators to resist outside interference. *—PTI*

BSF launches drone warfare school to train troops

NEW DELHI, 3 SEPT

The Border Security Force (BSF), tasked with guarding India's borders with Pakistan and Bangladesh, has launched a School of Drone Warfare at its Officers' Training Academy in Tekanpur, Madhya Pradesh. The school will train units of "drone commandos" and "drone warriors" for modern operations, including surveillance, UAV operations, anti-drone tactics, and intelligence gathering. The institute features simulators, live flying zones, night operation facilities, payload integration, radio frequency jammers, and AI-assisted tools. 18 BSF personnel were awarded gallantry medals for their bravery in Operation Sindoor. *—PTI*

NDA calls Bihar Bandh over PM 'abused' row

PATNA, 3 SEPT

The National Democratic Alliance (NDA) has announced a statewide bandh in Bihar on 4 September against the use of abusive language against Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his late mother during an event during the 'Vote Chori Yatra' in the state recently.

BJP's Bihar state president, Dilip Jaiswal, said the bandh will be observed from 7am to 12 noon, though essential services, including emergency facilities and rail operations, will remain unaffected.

The BJP Mahila Morcha lead the protest.

Meanwhile, PM Modi also took an indirect jibe at INDIA bloc leaders, calling them "naamdaars," people born with a silver spoon who could no understand the struggles of poor mothers or the suffering and pain of their children, as they inherited power.

Meanwhile, RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav accused the BJP-led NDA of practising "impure and insincere politics" by calling a Bihar bandh to protest alleged abuse aimed at Prime Minister Narendra Modi's late mother during the Congress' Voter Adhikar Yatra.

Speaking to journalists, Yadav, who joined Rahul Gandhi during fortnight-long yatra, said: "They are in power and yet calling a bandh. BJP is rattled by our yatra, which covered over 1,300km across 25 districts." *—PTI*

- BJP's Bihar state President, Dilip Jaiswal, said the bandh will be observed from 7am to 12 noon, though essential services

NO WORK-LIFE BALANCE?

M'rashtra govt okays 10-hour workday

MUMBAI, 3 SEPT

The Maharashtra cabinet has approved amendments to increase maximum daily working hours for private sector employees from 9 to 10 hours, aiming to attract investment, generate employment, and protect workers' rights.

Chaired by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, the cabinet cleared recommendations from a central task force, aligning Maharashtra with states like Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, and Tripu-ra that have already enacted similar reforms.

The changes will amend the Factories Act, 1948 and the Maharashtra Shops and Establishments (Regu-lation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 2017.

Under the revised Factories Act, industries can operate with more flexibility during peak demand or la-bour shortages. Daily working limits will rise from 9 to 12 hours, rest breaks after 6 hours (previously 5), and quarterly legal overtime from 115 to 144 hours—requiring written worker consent. Weekly hours will increase from 10.5 to 12.

In shops and establishments (with 20 or more employees), daily hours will increase to 10, emergency duty to 12, and overtime to 144 hours. Establishments with fewer than 20 workers will no longer need registration, but must notify authorities via a simplified intimation process.

The government claims the move will improve ease of doing business, promote job creation, and safe-guard workers' rights—ensuring double pay for overtime and improved workplace conditions, especially for women.

The labour department, which presented the proposal, believes the reforms will benefit both employees and employers. *—PTI*

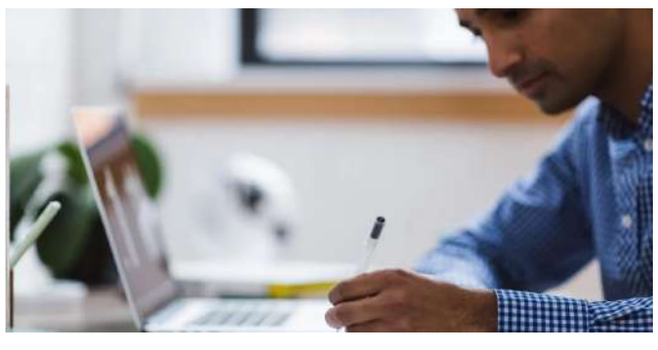


PHOTO: PIXABAY

Murder case: Gangster Gawli walks out of jail after 17 yrs

MUMBAI, 3 SEPT

After spending more than 17 years behind bars, gangster-turned-politician Arun Gawli on Wednesday walked out of the Nagpur Central Jail with the Supreme Court last week granting him bail in a 2007 murder case, officials said.

The apex court granted bail to 76-year-old Gawli, who was serving life imprisonment for the murder of Mumbai Shiv Sena corporator Kamlakar Jamsandekar.

In its order passed on 28 August, the bench of Justices MM Sundresh and N Kotiswar Singh noted that Gawli was in jail for over 17 years and his appeal was pending before it.

Gawli, who was booked under the Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA), had challenged the 9 December, 2019 verdict of the Bombay High Court, upholding his life sentence given by the trial court. He shot to prominence from Dagdi Chawl, a neighbourhood of Byculla, and is the founder of the Akhil Bharatiya Sena. He was an MLA from 2004 to 2009 from the Chinchpokli assembly constituency in Mumbai. In August 2012, a sessions court in Mumbai sentenced him to life imprisonment in the case and imposed a Rs 17 lakh fine. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

PHOTO: PTI

Haryana's wanted criminal deported from Cambodia

NEW DELHI, 3 SEPT

Notorious criminal Mainpal Dhilla, also known as Maipal Badli and Sonu Kumar, has been extradited from Cambodia in a joint operation by the CBI, Haryana Police, the Union Home Ministry, and the External Affairs Ministry, officials said on Wednesday. Dhilla, convicted in multiple cases including murder, attempted murder, use of firearms, and criminal conspiracy, was serving a life sentence. He was released on parole on 17 July, 2018 but fled abroad using a fake identity. Following a Red Notice issued via Interpol in November 2024, Cambodian authorities arrested him in July 2025. A police team brought him back on 2 September. Dhilla, also accused of committing murder while he was lodged in jail. *—PTI*

Bandh in Odisha over Notified Area Council status

BALASORE, 3 SEPT

A seven-hour bandh was observed in Khaira, Odisha's Balasore district, on Tuesday, demanding the town's inclusion in the Notified Area Council (NAC) list. The shutdown, called by Swabhiman Manch, began at 7am and lasted until 2pm. Shops, schools, offices, and markets remained closed, while vehicles stayed off the roads as protesters blocked key junctions. Swabhiman Manch president Prashant Kumar Behera said the bandh received support from residents across all sections. Local resident Jagatananda Mohapatra accused the government of "gross injustice", stating that the previous administration had promised NAC status, but Khaira's name was missing from the list. The government recently announced 28 new NACs and upgraded seven others. *—PTI*

3 minors held for killing man in Mahrashtra

NASHIK, 3 SEPT

Police have detained three minor boys, aged 15 to 16, for allegedly killing an unidentified man who reportedly harassed their female friend in Maharashtra's Nashik city, officials said on Wednesday. The incident occurred around 1.45pm on Tuesday near a footpath opposite a hotel in the Thakkar Bazaar area. The boys allegedly attacked the man, believed to be aged between 45 and 50, by striking his head with a cement paver block. The severely injured man later succumbed to his injuries. A case was registered. *—PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

Kerala sets up 1st Senior Citizens Commission

T'PURAM, 3 SEPT

The Kerala government has set up the country's first Senior Citizens Commission to safeguard the rights of the elderly and tackle issues such as neglect, abuse, and exploitation. State Minister for Higher Education and Social Justice R Bindu announced that former Rajya Sabha MP K Somaprasad will chair the Thiruvananthapuram-based Commission. The other members include Amaravila Ramakrishnan, E M Radha, K N K Namboothiri, and Lopes Mathew. Formed under the Kerala Senior Citizens Commission Act, 2025, passed in March, the body will focus on the welfare, protection, and rehabilitation of senior citizens. It will also issue guidelines and provide support to address the hardships faced by the elderly. *—PTI*

7 killed as rains show no mercy in HP

19,500 people evacuated, 1,155 roads blocked; Red alert on in several districts of the state

People wade through a flooded street near ISBT in New Delhi as the water level in Yamuna continues to rise; NDRF personnel search for survivors at a site of a landslide in Kullu in Himachal Pradesh on Wednesday; Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann visits a flood-hit Ferozepur in Punjab on Wednesday **PHOTO: PTI**

CHANDIGARH, 3 SEPT

Seven people, including four members of a family, were killed, while another was missing after a landslide struck two houses in Jangambag in Himachal Pradesh's Mandi.

The deceased were identified as Gurpreet Singh, his wife Bharti, their daughter Kirat, Shanti Devi, and Surender Kaur. The sixth victim remained unidentified.

Search operations are on to locate the missing man. The landslide occurred on 2 September, severely damaging two houses and trapping a passer-by.

Rescue teams are clearing the debris and remove boulders. Nearby houses have been evacuated as a precautionary measure.

Locals reportedly heard loud rumbling noises before the hillside collapsed, engulfing the nearby houses.

Meanwhile, in Kullu, a landslide struck a residential area in inner Akhara Bazaar, damaging a house and leaving two persons trapped. Rescue teams are trying to locate the two.

Mud and debris of a house that collapsed during a landslide triggered by heavy rains at Akhada Bazaar in Kullu district in Himachal Pradesh on Wednesday **PHOTO: PTI**

An orange alert was issued in Mandi, Kangra, Sirmaur, and Kinnaur and a yellow alert in Una and Bilaspur districts.

Dozens of vehicles were damaged in Kinnaur district after being hit by stones that continued to fall on National Highway 5 between the stretch of Nathpa and Wangtu.

All government and private educational institutions, in Shimla, Kangra, and Sirmaur districts remained shut.

1,155 roads, including seven National Highways, remain blocked.

2,477 electricity distribution transformers and 720 water supply schemes were disrupted. *—Agencies*

Heavy rains in J&K; 2 killed

JAMMU/SRINAGAR, 3 SEPT

Heavy rains across Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday left a woman and her daughter dead while 40 persons were trapped in the flooded Garkhal village in Akhnoor.

In Anantnag, police rescued 25 nomadic families stranded under a bridge.

Rivers were in spate and major roads remained closed between Udhampur and Banihal.

Educational institutions in the valley and Jammu region remained closed.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah directed the administration to intensify the ground response and conduct evacuations in critical zones.

Heavy rains were forecast in Jammu, Kathua, Reasi, Doda, Udhampur, Rajouri, Ramban, Kishtwar, Poonch, Anantnag, Shopian and Kulgam districts.

Meanwhile, over 7,500 people were evacuated from low-lying flooded areas as the Yamuna river level rose in Delhi.Four persons were killed and three others went missing after a portion of a small dam collapsed in Chhattisgarh. *—PTI*

Vehicles get partially submerged in a flooded area follwing incessant rains in Anantnag district in Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday **PHOTO: PTI**

FOR EXIT AND ENTRY

MHA designates 114 immigration posts across India

NEW DELHI, 3 SEPT

PHOTO: PTI

The Union Home Ministry has officially designated 114 immigration posts across India, enabling regulated international travel via air, sea, land, and rail. The move follows the notification of the Immigration and Foreigners Order, 2025, issued on 1st September.

According to a gazette notification, 37 airports, 34 sea and river ports, 37 land border points, and 6 railway stations have been authorised as designated immigration posts for the entry and exit of international passengers.

Airports

Key international airports with immigration facilities now include Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Kolkata, and Kochi, along with regional hubs such as Lucknow, Indore, Surat, Bagdogra, Gaya, and Port Blair.

Seaports and river ports

Major seaports such as Mumbai, Chennai, Cochin, Visakhapatnam, Kandla, Paradeep, and river ports in Assam (Karimganj, Dhubri, Silghat) and Lakshadweep (Agati, Minicoy) are now designated immigration entry/exit points.

Land border checkpoints

A total of 37 landports, particularly along India's borders with Nepal, Bangladesh, and Myanmar, have been listed. These include Attari Road, Dera Baba Nanak (Punjab), Gauriphanta, Sonauli (Uttar Pradesh), Raxaul, Jogbani (Bihar), and several posts in Tripura, Assam, West Bengal, and Mizoram.

Railports

Six railway stations have been marked as designated rail immigration posts. These include Munabao (Rajasthan), Attari (Punjab), Gede, Petrapole/Chitpur, Hari daspur, and New Jalpaiguri (West Bengal) – all located on the India-Pakistan or India-Bangladesh borders.

The list ensures smoother international travel while enhancing border security and immigration control across transit modes. *—PTI*

'Bills can't be subjected to Guv's whim'

NEW DELHI, 3 SEPT

The will of people in the form of a bill cannot be subjected to "whims and fancies" of governors and President as the executive is barred from interfering with the legislative process, the West Bengal government argued before the Supreme Court on Wednesday.

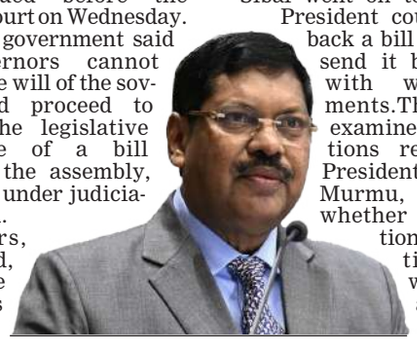
The state government said that governors cannot question the will of the sovereign and proceed to examine the legislative competence of a bill passed by the assembly, which falls under judiciary's domain.

Governors, Sibal said, have to take decisions on the bills forthwith and not in a three or six-month period.

He said once a bill was passed by a legislature, there was a presumption of constitutionality.

The court said the Governor would have to see whether the bill was repugnant or not.

Sibal went on to say even President couldn't hold back a bill and had to send it back forthwith with comments.The court examined 14 questions referred by President Droupadi Murmu, including whether constitutional authorities can withhold assent to bills. *—PTI*



SC slams conman's wife over bail hearing

NEW DELHI, 3 SEPT

The Supreme Court on Wednesday rebuked Leena Paulose, wife of alleged conman Sukesh Chandrashekar, for seeking an expedited hearing of her bail plea in a Rs 200 crore extortion case. The court said the trend of approaching the apex court for early hearings and adjournments was "not acceptable". *—PTI*

SC asks govt to make laws for foreigner's bail

MUMBAI, 3 SEPT

The Supreme Court underlined the need for a policy to ensure foreign nationals committing crimes in India don't flee from justice. The court set aside the Jharkhand High Court's order granting bail to Alex David, a Nigerian national booked for various offences. He jumped bail and had been absconding *—PTI*

2nd baby dies of rat bite in MP

INDORE, 3 SEPT

A second newborn girl who was bitten by rats at Indore's government-run Maharaja Yashwantrao Hospital (MYH) has died, with doctors citing septicemia as the cause of death.

According to MYH Deputy Superintendent Dr Jitendra Verma, the infant, who weighed just 1.6 kg, was already suffering from serious congenital deformities, including intestinal malformation. She had undergone surgery a week earlier but succumbed to blood poisoning due to septicemia. The baby had sustained rat bites on two fingers of her left hand, which caused what officials described as "mild scratches".

A rat perched near a bed for infants **PHOTO: SCREENGRAB**

The baby's family opted out of a post-mortem, and the body was handed over without further examination.

This follows the death of another newborn girl at the same hospital on Tuesday, who had also been bitten by rats. Hospital officials claimed she died of pneumonia and also had congenital conditions.

Both infants were admitted to the neonatal ICU. In response to the incidents, two nursing officers have been suspended and the nursing superintendent has been removed. A private firm responsible for cleaning and pest control was fined Rs 1 lakh and issued a warning. Authorities launched a probe into the incident. *—PTI*

Exam rules for for disabled get stricter

NEW DELHI, 3 SEPT

The Centre has tightened the rules on the use of scribes in allcompetitive examinations for persons with disabilities (PwDs), making it mandatory for examining bodies to prepare their own vetted scribe pools within two years and phasing out the "own scribe" system flagged for malpractice.

The guidelines, issued by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, aim to ensure fairness and transparency in exams while aligning them with the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, and incorporating Supreme Court directives.

Candidates should attempt exams with the help of assistive technologies, reducing reliance on scribes.

A scribe's qualification must be two to three academic years below the minimum required for the exam.

Candidates with functional limitations in writing will receive compensatory time of 20 minutes per hour. *—PTI*

1ST GLOBAL CASE

Kerala doctors save boy from rare dual brain infections

T'PURAM, 3 SEPT

Kerala doctors have successfully treated a 17-year-old boy with simultaneous infections of amoebic meningoencephalitis and Aspergillus flavus, Health Minister Veena George said on Wednesday.

This first known case in the world where a patient with both infections had been treated successfully and made a full recovery.

"The boy was under treatment at Alappuzha Medical College Hospital for three weeks and was then shifted to Thiruvananthapuram Medical College. The neurosurgery team conducted surgeries on the patient successfully," George said.

- This first known case in the world where a patient with both infections had been treated successfully and made a full recovery after two surgeries.

The microbiology lab at Alappuzha identified the infections from the patient's spinal fluid.

"We also used five drugs for the treatment as both infections are fatal. The patient is perfectly normal now," said Dr Aravind, Associate Professor, Department of Infectious Diseases, Thiruvan anthapuram Medical College.

86 cases of amoebic meningoencephalitis, with 21 deaths were reported in Kerala in the past two years.

Thiruvananthapuram and Kozhikode have active amoebic meningitis cases, with 11 in each. *—PTI*

Odisha's Debrigarh to be India's new tiger reserve

SAMBALPUR, 3 SEPT

Odisha's Debrigarh Wildlife Sanctuary prepares to become the country's newest tiger reserve.

The 804-square-kilometre sanctuary, which received National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) approval in July 2025, has transformed from a conflict-prone area with human habitation into a thriving ecosystem that generated Rs 5 crore in tourism revenue and attracted 85,000 visitors in 2025.

40 per cent of all animal herds now consist of newborns, while the Indian gaur population jumped from 670 to over 700 in just six months.

Over 400 families were voluntarily relocated from the core area under a comprehensive package that included Rs 15 lakh compensation, agricultural land, pucca houses, and skill development training.

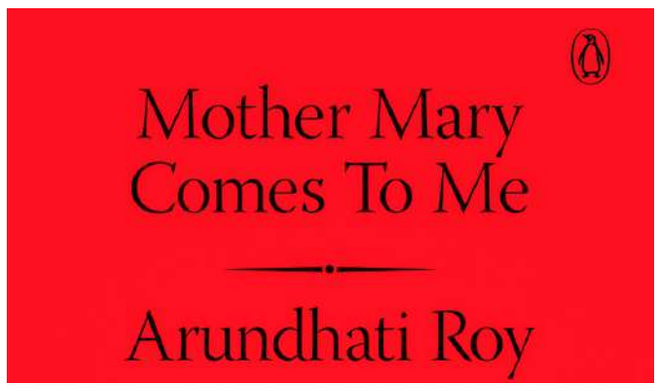
PHOTO: FREEPIK

- 40 per cent of all animal herds now consist of newborns, while the Indian gaur population jumped from 670 to over 700 in just six months.

The sanctuary hosts over 300 bird species. The sanctuary is also deploying advanced monitoring systems. *—PTI*

Of the moth, the mother & the motherland — a memoir

SHANY SARA BENNY



Arundhati Roy's most recent book, 'Mother Mary Comes to Me' starts and ends with the account of Mrs Mary Roy's funeral **PHOTO: PTI**

"Where are you from?'

'Who, me? I'm … well… I'm here now.'

The more our world fractures into dagger-shaped shards, the more we club each other to death with our genes, our gods, our flags, our languages, the colour of our skin, the purity of our roots, our histories both true and false - the more my answer to that question remains the same. I'm here now."

Arundhati Roy's most recent book, 'Mother Mary Comes to Me' starts and ends with the account of Mrs Mary Roy's funeral. One cannot fault someone who enters this book assuming that it is all about her strained relationship with her authoritarian mother. But no, this book is like a house of mirrors for those who are willing to see. Undeniable truths stare back at us from every angle. For some of us who are near her age, reading this book feels like sisters telling stories through stormy evenings. Stories we knew but still would say again and again and again. It felt like validation. Validating what we remembered, questioning some, and affirming some. This is not to say that Mrs Mary Roy's role in this book is in any way diminished. She is the pulse of this book. And yet, this book is much more than just about a very unusual, volatile, and intense mother-daughter relationship.

This young family of three arrives in Ooty from Calcutta - Mary Roy, LKC (the son) and little Arundhati. Mary, a Syrian Christian, had married a Bengali, Micky Roy (taboo) and then divorced him (big, big taboo!). The three now stay at Mary Roy's late father's house. Very soon, Mary Roy's mother and brother came to evict them from this shelter because, as per the Christian Succession Law at the time, daughters had a minimal stake in the family's wealth. Thankfully, the law was relevant only in Kerala and did not apply in Ooty. Yet this humiliation became the wind beneath Mary Roy's wings - an insult she tucked within herself till she built herself. And then she went on to not just fight for her share, but to remove the law itself. And succeeded. Arundhati Roy describes how the Syrian Christian community shunned Mary Roy for several years because she fought this law. How and why our women support "traditions" that are surely detrimental to even themselves - is a mystery we may never solve!

READING CORNER

- The book is like a house of mirrors for those who are willing to see. Undeniable truths stare back at us from every angle.

While she narrates about her turbulent young days in Kottayam, punctuated by the banker mother's eccentric, cruel "mothering," we see two young children trying to make sense of their turbulent world. They made friends with whoever they made friends with. They received love from the magnanimous Kurussammals of this world, loves that were never defined by caste or religion, but by steadfastness. During these young years, Roy witnesses a moment that defines her impression of marriage. There is an affluent household, and the husband throws the mail to the floor with no thought, and the wife picks it up with perhaps no thought. This becomes the image of a "marriage" in young Arundhati's mind.

Her experiences with her mother naturally shape Arundhati's view of the world and her own place in it. Roy mentioned in an interview that in those years, there was no family, friends, or relatives - it was just the three. In such a small family unit, with the children being so young and vulnerable, Mary Roy's incredible rudeness was sure to resonate deeply within the psyche of these children. To be called "stupid", and "ugly" and "pig", to be mimicked, to be told to fend for themselves with the threat of orphanhood - by all standards, this was nothing less than abuse. And no child should have to undergo this. Having said that, I echo what Roy underlines: "I have seen and written about such sorrow, such systemic deprivation, such unmitigated wickedness, such diverse iterations of hell, that I can only count myself among the most fortunate." As we read the accounts of the last two decades in the book, we can see Roy evolving, becoming a product of, and yet impervious to, all the cruelty Mary Roy meted out to her and LKC. It is incredible to me how she had the discernment to separate the magnificent, successful Mary Roy from the cruel, angry Mrs Roy, the banker who beat up LKC till the ruler broke.

And yet, instead of allowing these experiences to crush her, Arundhati Roy gleans wisdom from them: "On the occasions when I am toasted or applauded, I always feel that someone else, someone quiet, is being beaten in the other room." Years later, she (and we) would see this come true as LK Advani's airconditioned rath yatra drives a poisoned road through India's veins, as the Babri Masjid is destroyed, as a community is burnt, raped and destroyed under the watch of the law keepers, as minorities are lynched and the killing is telecast, as Afzal Guru is hanged; "A man's life was prescribed as medication to soothe a maddened nation."

Roy's memoir is drenched in the political acids of the last many decades. As we relive these events and stories through her lens, we are reminded that none of us are apolitical. Not one of us. There is nothing personal. Everything is political. Even our convenient, comfortable ignorance. If you have followed Indian politics closely over the last few decades, her interactions with the outcast "wanted" revolutionaries and also her accounts of the Narmada Bachao Andolan and the Kashmir militant situation will make you shudder, will make you question your own role in this atrocious madness, because the truth is that none of us can escape this culpability. Please do not expect to read this book without having your heart repeatedly shredded - by Mrs. Roy, by the Indian government, by the helplessness of this huge population, by one's own comfortable blindness, which is constantly leveraged by the media.

The book addresses multiple issues - casteism, classism, social injustice, gender dynamics ("This is India, my dear!"), "demon-crazy" democracy, communalism, political manipulations, slut shaming, child abuse, abuse of privilege, of position. And she says the story in a language that she "hunted down like prey, disembowelled, and ate" till it became her writer's language, coursing through her veins. In an interview years ago, Roy once said that language was like the skin of her thoughts. This reference has stayed with me through the years – to me, it is a gold standard analogy.

In this memoir, we meet a woman who was considered "not Christian enough, not Hindu enough, not communist enough." She then took long walks through many dangerous terrains to get to know her country, her fish, worms, and comrades. Arundhati Roy, the architect, the writer, the thinker - she has built a tricky house of mirrors with this book. In this huge mirror-house, an old mother is being bathed, and she shamelessly asks, "Would you like to watch your mother being bathed? Why don't you take a photograph?"

The writer is passionate educator and an avid reader who dreams of a John Lennon world. The views expressed are the author's own.

SALAR ساہر

Northeast sees highest no. of cancer cases in India

Northeast India's Aizawl, East Khasi Hills, Papumpare, Kamrup Urban, and Mizoram consistently recorded the highest rates of cancer between 2015 and 2019, according to a study.

The cross-sectional study used data from 43 population-based cancer registries (PBCRs) across India.

Between 1 January, 2015, and 31 December, 2019, as many as 7.08 lakh cancer cases and 2.06 lakh deaths were reported from 43 PBCRs across India. Women accounted for a higher proportion of cancer cases, and men for deaths due to it.

Women comprised 51.1 per cent of the total cancer cases and 45 per cent of the deaths. Men, on the other hand, accounted for 48.9 per cent of the disease incidents and 55 per cent of the deaths due to it.

The study obtained population-at-risk data from the Census of India, and the findings were assessed by registry area.

According to the study, the lifetime risk of developing cancer in India was 11.0 per cent.

However, in Mizoram, the reported lifetime risk was a staggering 21.1 per cent in males and 18.9 per cent in females. Aizawl district reported the highest age-adjusted incidence rate (AAIR) in both males and females.

The most common types of cancers were oral, lung, and prostate in males and breast, cervical, and ovarian in females, the study found. Among metropolitan cities -- with a population of over 1 million-- Delhi had the highest overall cancer AAIR for males, while Srinagar recorded the highest AAIR for lung cancer.

Oral cancer showed significant increases in 14 PBCRs among males and four PBCRs among females.

The analysis revealed a distinct pattern in the leading cancer sites across India. Among males, lung cancer emerged as the most frequently diagnosed form of the disease in the southern regions and metropolitan cities, including Visakhapatnam, Bengaluru, Malabar, Kollam, Thiruvananthapuram, Chennai, and Delhi.

A previous study had found that patients in India tend to present with lung cancer about a decade earlier than those in Western populations, with a median age ranging from 54 to 70 years.

Additionally, half of the patients were diagnosed with advanced-stage disease. A systematic review and meta-analysis on tobacco use revealed a significantly higher risk of respiratory system cancers.

Mouth cancer is the predominant form of cancer in western (Ahmedabad Urban, Bhopal, Nagpur, and Wardha), central (Barshi Rural, Mumbai, Aurangabad, Osmanabad and Beed, Pune, Sindhudurg, and Ratnagiri), and certain northern (Prayagraj and Varanasi) regions, the study found.

It underlined that since tobacco and alcohol use are major risk factors, it is vital to promote widespread education about their harmful effects. Furthermore, quitline services and the implementation of early detection programs are critical for effective prevention and control.

In India, breast, cervical, and ovarian cancers have been consistently ranked among the top three most common forms of cancers in women, with disparities observed in survival rates for breast and cervical cancers.

The increasing incidence of breast cancer and decreasing incidence of cervical cancer were more associated with generational shifts in risk factors than period effects, the researchers said.

Effective cancer control in India requires coordinated efforts, focusing on public awareness, prevention, and early detection. Awareness campaigns help reduce stigma and encourage timely health-seeking behaviour, the study underlined.

Beyond prevention, upgrading existing cancer care facilities and expanding services in high-incidence regions is vital to ensure equitable access to quality and affordable care.

However, cancer care delivery faces challenges, including regional disparities, socioeconomic inequalities, low awareness, and varied health-seeking patterns.

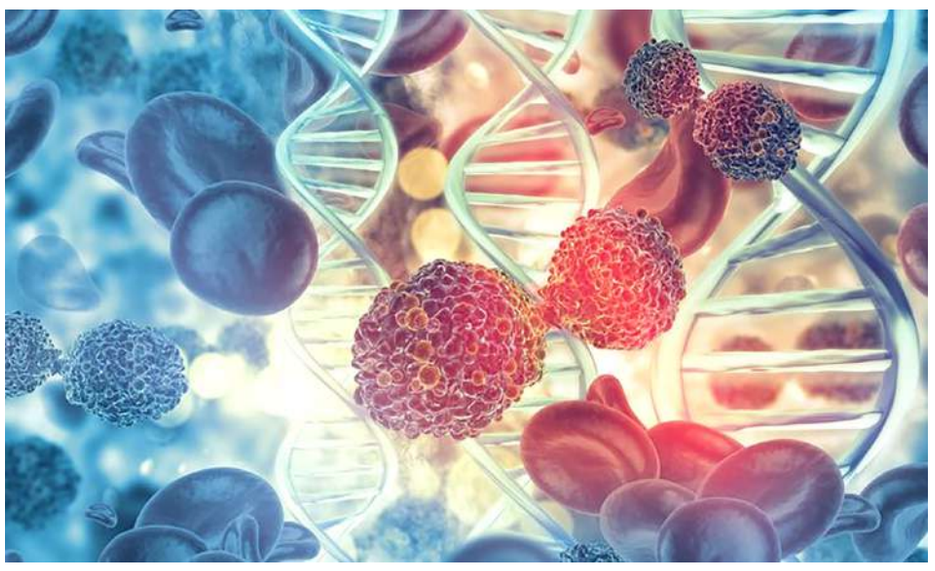
Addressing these issues requires a collaborative, data-driven approach to build equitable and accessible cancer care across India, it stated.

Globally, cancer contributes to approximately 10 million deaths each year. In 2022, the Global Cancer Observatory (GCO) pegged the total number of cancer cases worldwide at approximately 20.0 million and projected these to increase to 32.6 million by 2045.

The Southeast Asia region is estimated to have a total of 2.4 million new cancer cases and 1.5 million cancer deaths.

Cancer incidence and mortality in this region are estimated to increase to 4 million new cases and 2.7 million deaths by 2045. Concurrently, the GCO estimated that the incidence of cancer in India will increase to approximately 2.46 million cases by 2045.

India ranks second in Asia and third in the world in terms of the number of cancer cases, and the likelihood of developing cancer during one's lifetime is approximately 11 per cent. *—PTI*



According to the study, the lifetime risk of developing cancer in India was 11.0 per cent **PHOTO: FREEPIK**

LETTERS

write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

Construction intensifies at site linked to Israel's nuclear programme

Intensified construction at a major site linked to Israel's long-suspected nuclear weapons programme has raised renewed concerns about the country's atomic ambitions, according to new satellite images analysed by nuclear experts. The work is underway at the Shimon Peres Negev Nuclear Research Centre near Dimona, a facility believed to be central to Israel's undeclared nuclear arsenal.

Seven nuclear analysts who reviewed recent satellite imagery said the scale and location of the construction strongly suggest that it is tied to Israel's weapons programme. While opinions vary on the precise purpose of the structure, all agreed it is likely linked to military nuclear activities.

The work comes just months after Israel and the United States jointly bombed multiple Iranian nuclear facilities, citing concerns over Tehran's potential pursuit of nuclear weapons. Among the targets was Iran's heavy water reactor at Arak. The contrast between the scrutiny applied to Iran and the lack of oversight over Israel's own nuclear developments is likely to fuel further international criticism.

Possible new reactor or warhead facility

Satellite images taken on 5 July by Planet Labs PBC show intensified construction at a site adjacent to Israel's decades-old heavy water reactor. What began in 2021 as a large excavation—approximately 150 metres long and 60 metres wide—has now evolved into a substantial underground structure, complete with thick concrete retaining walls and overhead cranes.

While no containment dome is yet visible, some analysts noted that one could still be added later, or that the facility might be designed without it.

Three of the experts believe the most plausible explanation is the construction of a new heavy water reactor, potentially to replace the ageing Dimona reactor, which has been in operation since the 1960s. These types of reactors can produce plutonium, a key ingredient in nuclear warheads.

"The reactor core is likely to be quite tall, and the structure we see reflects that," said Jeffrey Lewis, a nonproliferation specialist at the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies. "It's probably a reactor, that judgement is circumstantial but that's the nature of these things. It's very hard to imagine it is anything else."

The remaining four experts said while the building could indeed be a new reactor, it might also be a facility intended for assembling nuclear weapons. Due to the early stage of construction and Israel's refusal to disclose details, they declined to make definitive assessments.

This satellite photo provided by Planet Labs PBC shows the Shimon Peres Negev Nuclear Research Center near the city of Dimona, Israel **PHOTO: PBC LABS**

Secrecy and strategic ambiguity

Israel has neither confirmed nor denied possessing nuclear weapons. The government did not respond to media requests for comment on the construction, nor did the White House—its closest international ally.

Details of the Dimona facility remain among Israel's most closely guarded state secrets. However, in the 1980s, whistleblower Mordechai Vanunu revealed photographs and documents from inside the facility, leading international experts to conclude that Israel had developed a stockpile of nuclear warheads, estimated in 2022 by the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists to number around 90.

Israel's longstanding policy of "nuclear ambiguity" has served as a strategic deterrent since the country's early years, following its establishment in 1948 and subsequent conflicts with Arab neighbours. The facility at Dimona is believed to have been developed in the late 1950s with French assistance.

Unlike most other nuclear-armed nations, Israel is not a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), exempting it from oversight by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). As such, the agency is not permitted to conduct inspections of Dimona, and international scrutiny is limited.

"The lack of transparency forces the public and analysts to speculate," said Edwin Lyman, a nuclear specialist at the Union of Concerned Scientists. "It's a problem when you have a nuclear-armed state outside of global norms."

When contacted, the IAEA confirmed that Israel is "not obligated to provide information about other nuclear facilities in the country" beyond its smaller Soreq research reactor, which is under limited international oversight.

Strategic goals: Plutonium or tritium?

Analysts say the new structure at Dimona may serve different strategic goals depending on its design.

If it is a heavy water reactor, it could be intended to continue the production of plutonium for nuclear warheads, particularly as the existing reactor nears the end of its service life. Others suggest the new facility could be focused on producing tritium—a radioactive isotope used to enhance the explosive power of nuclear warheads. Tritium decays at a rate of 5% per year, requiring replenishment to maintain an effective arsenal.

"If they're building a new production reactor, it doesn't necessarily mean they want more plutonium. It could be about manufacturing tritium," Lyman added.

Daryl G. Kimball, executive director of the Washington-based Arms Control Association, emphasised the implications: "If it's a heavy water reactor, they're maintaining the capacity to produce spent fuel, which can be reprocessed into plutonium for additional warheads."

Double standards?

The timing of the construction, so soon after the Israeli-US strikes on Iran's nuclear infrastructure, may raise accusations of double standards in global nuclear policy. While Iran's activities are subject to intense international inspection and condemnation, Israel continues to operate beyond the reach of international law and oversight.

With no public discussion inside Israel and no external verification permitted, the developments at Dimona remain shrouded in secrecy. However, analysts warn that in an increasingly volatile Middle East, a renewed focus on nuclear capabilities, declared or undeclared, only raises the stakes.

As Lewis put it: "This is a reminder that while much of the world focuses on Iran, there's another nuclear programme in the region, one that's very real, and very active." *—PTI*

THE WORLD FACES PEACE OR WAR, SAYS XI

Flanked by Kim & Putin during a military parade, he says peace is possible when nations are treated as equals

Leaders from 26 foreign countries including Russian President Vladimir Putin, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif join Chinese President Xi Jinping during a massive military parade in Beijing to commemorate China's 80th anniversary of victory over Japan in World War 2 on Wednesday *PHOTO: XINHUA*

BEIJING, 3 SEPT

Chinese President Xi Jinping on Wednesday said the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation is "unstoppable" during a massive military parade in Beijing attended by 26 foreign leaders including Russian President Vladimir Putin and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. Addressing the parade which commemorates the 80th anniversary of China's victory against Japanese aggression in World War II, Xi said that humanity is faced with a choice between peace or war.

Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Nepal Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli and Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu took part in the event.

"Today, humanity is again faced with a choice between peace or war, dialogue or confrontation, and win-win outcomes or zero-sum games," Xi said, flanked by Putin and Kim. "The Chinese people will stand firmly on the right side of history and on the side of human progress, adhere to the path of peaceful development, and join hands with the rest of the world to build a community with a shared future for humanity."

"Only when nations across the world treat each other as equals, live in harmony and mutually support one another can common security be safeguarded, the root cause of war eliminated, and historical tragedies prevented from recurring," he said.

Notably, leaders from the US and the EU, Japan and South Korea have stayed away from the parade.

After the parade, Putin and Kim held a bilateral meeting. They travelled from a formal reception to the negotiations in the same car, the Kremlin said.

The parade was the first time the North Korean leader has attended an international gathering of world leaders. He rarely leaves North Korea, and usually only meets leaders one-on-one.

During the meeting, Putin thanked Kim for sending troops to fight in Russia's war on Ukraine.

According to South Korean assessments, North Korea has sent around 15,000 troops to Russia since last year.

It has also sent large quantities of military equipment, including ballistic missiles and artillery.

Kim stressed that "if there's anything I can do for you and the people of Russia, if there is more that needs to be done, I will consider it as a fraternal duty, an obligation that we surely need to bear, and will be prepared to do everything possible to help."

Putim also formally invited Kim to Moscow, the Kremlin said, althought the exact dates are yet to be decided.

—Agencies

Kim's daughter makes public appearance

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un brought his teenage daughter to Beijing this week in her first public outing overseas, fuelling further speculation that she may be his potential successor in the family's dynastic rule. Not much is known about Kim Ju Ae, who first appeared in public in 2022. Analysts believe she is around 13 years old.

"May President Xi and the wonderful people of China have a great and lasting day of celebration. Please give my warmest regards to Vladimir Putin, and Kim Jong Un, as you conspire against the US. The big question to be answered is whether or not Xi will mention the massive amount of support and "blood" that the US gave to China in order to help it to secure its freedom

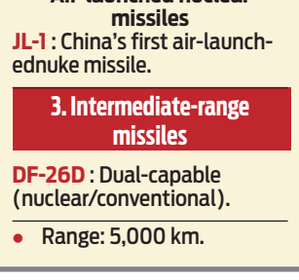
-Donald Trump, US President

CHINA UNVEILS NUCLEAR TRIAD FOR FIRST TIME

China for the 1st time displayed new weapons at the parade. Here are the weapons displayed:

1. Laser & directed energy weapons

- LY-1 laser weapon:
- Targets & disables optical sensors of enemy equipment.



2. Strategic nuclear missiles

(land, sea, air triad) Intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs)

DF-5C : Liquid-fuelled ICBM.

- Range: 20,000+ km.
- Can target 10 locations simultaneously with 10 warheads.

DF-31, DF-61 Land-based nuclear missiles.

Submarine-launched missiles

JL-3 : Submarine-launched ICBM.

- Larger range, sea-based nuclear deterrence.

Air-launched nuclear missiles

JL-1 : China's first air-launched nuke missile.

3. Intermediate-range missiles

DF-26D : Dual-capable (nuclear/conventional).

- Range: 5,000 km.

4. Hypersonic missiles

YJ-15, YJ-17, YJ-19, YJ-20 : Precision strikes on ships & land targets, can be carried on jets, ships & subs.

5. Cruise missiles

CJ-1000: Vehicle-mounted, supersonic.

YJ-18C : Ship-launched.

YJ-21 : Air-launched ballistic missile.

6. Fighter aircraft (5th gen stealth jets)

- J-20, J-20A, J-20S (Twin-Seat), J-35A, J-35 (Navy)
- Stealth, radar-evading.
- Arrowhead formations.
- First public display of 5 stealth models together.

7. Air defence systems

HQ-19 : Intercepts hypersonic weapons. Impossible to detect.

HQ-20 & HQ-22A : Anti-jet & anti-missile defence. Debuted in the parade.

HQ-29 : Can destroy ballistic missile in space.

Walden quits NYC race, urges unity against Mamdani

NEW YORK, 3 SEPT

Independent candidate Jim Walden on Tuesday suspended his New York City mayoral campaign, calling on rivals to unite against Democratic primary winner Zohran Mamdani. In his statement, Walden warned that Mamdani, a Democratic Socialist, posed a "Trojan Horse taking over City Hall" and urged lower-polling candidates to "set aside vanity" to prevent his victory. Walden, an attorney who represented Robert F Kennedy Jr and Conor McGregor, positioned himself as a free-market technocrat but failed to gain traction against Mayor Eric Adams, Andrew Cuomo, and Curtis Sliwa. Cuomo's spokesperson praised Walden's "selflessness," while Adams vowed to stay in the race. Mamdani's camp said support for his affordable New York agenda was surging. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

14 die in suicide blast during Balochistan rally

KARACHI, 3 SEPT

At least 14 people were killed and 35 injured in a suicide bombing following a Balochistan National Party (BNP) rally in Quetta on Tuesday night, media reports said. The blast occurred near Shahwani Stadium in the Sariab area about 15 minutes after the rally marking the fourth death anniversary of Baloch leader Sardar Attaullah Mengal concluded. Police confirmed the bomber detonated his explosives-laden jacket in the parking area as participants were leaving. BNP chief Akhtar Mengal and several senior leaders escaped unhurt, though former MPA Mir Ahmed Nawaz Baloch and central labour secretary Musa Jan were among the injured. Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti condemned the "cowardly act". No group has claimed responsibility. *—PTI*

Footage released by the US government. Trump boosted the military personnel around Venezuela, which responded in kind *PHOTO: SCREENGRAB*

11 die as Trump hits Venezuela 'drug ship' in Caribbean sea

WASHINGTON, 2 SEPT

President Donald Trump said Tuesday that the US has carried out a strike in the southern Caribbean against a drug-carrying vessel that departed from Venezuela and was operated by the Tren de Aragua gang.

He said 11 were killed in the operation.

"The strike occurred while the terrorists were at sea in International waters transporting illegal narcotics, heading to the United States," Trump said on Truth Social. "No US Forces were harmed in this strike. Please let this serve as notice to anybody even thinking about bringing drugs into the United States of America."

Secretary of State Marco Rubio said that the vessel was being operated by a "designated narco-terrorist organisation." He described the operation as a lethal strike.

Rubio addressed the strike on Tuesday shortly before he was scheduled to depart for Mexico and Ecuador for talks on drug cartels, security, tariffs and more.

The US recently announced plans to boost its maritime force in the waters off Venezuela to combat threats from Latin American drug cartels.

Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro had responded by deploying troops along Venezuela's coast and border with neighbouring Colombia

—PTI

Nat'l Guards soon in Baltimore, Chicago: Don

WASHINGTON, 2 SEPT

President Donald Trump said Tuesday that he will direct federal law enforcement intervention to combat crime in Chicago and Baltimore, despite staunch opposition.

Asked about sending National Guard troops to Chicago, Trump said, "We're going in," but added, "I didn't say when."

"I have an obligation," the President said. "This isn't a political thing."

Trump has already sent National Guard troops into Washington, DC, and federalised the police force in the nation's capital.

Trump criticised Democratic Illinois Gov. JB Pritzker, who has said crime in Chicago doesn't require federal intervention.

"If (he) would call me up, I would love to do it," Trump said. "Now, we're going to do it anyway. We have the right to do it."

Pritzker deemed Trump's comments "unhinged."

Later, Trump wrote on Truth Social that "Chicago is the murder capital of the world".

Trump also said he has an "obligation to protect this country, and that includes Baltimore." *—PTI*

US Vice President JD Vance, President Donald Trump and Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth in the Oval Office on Tuesday *PHOTO: PTI*

ICE can now use Israeli spyware

Immigration and Customs officials will now have access to Israeli-made tech that can hack into mobile phones. Graphite, developed by Paragon Solutions, can take listen to phone calls, read encrypted messages.

Govt 'releases' more Epstein files

The House Oversight Committee publicly posted the files it has received from the Justice Department on the sex trafficking investigations into Jeffrey Epstein and Ghislaine Maxwell. Still, the files mostly contain information already public.

Trump calls health rumours 'fake news'

Trump dismissed speculations about his health that swirled after he was out of the public eye for a few days. He called the social media buzz "fake news" and added that he was very active over the weakened. "I knew they were saying, like: Is he OK? How is he feeling? What's wrong?'" Trump said. Recently, Trump has been seen with bruising on the back of his right hand and swelling around his ankles.

Trump moves Space Command from Colorado to Alabama

WASHINGTON, 2 SEPT

President Donald Trump announced on Tuesday that US Space Command will be located in Alabama, reversing a Biden-era decision to keep it at its temporary headquarters in Colorado.

The long-expected decision from Trump caps a four-year tug of war between two states and opposing administrations about where to locate US Space Command, an intense fight because the headquarters would be a significant boon to the local economy.

Alabama and Colorado have long battled to claim Space Command.

"The US Space Command headquarters will move to the beautiful locale of a place called Huntsville, Alabama, forever to be known from this point forward as Rocket City," said Trump from the Oval Office on Tuesday. "We had a lot of competition for this and Alabama's getting it."

The announcement infuriated both Democratic and Republican officials in Colorado, which has a booming aerospace industry.

A review by the Defence Department inspector general was inconclusive and could not determine why Colorado was chosen over Alabama.

Trump said Huntsville won the race for because "they fought harder for it than anybody else." *—PTI*

Israel launches satellite to expand its Middle East intel

BEIRUT/ PARIS/ JERUSALEM, 3 SEPT

Israel has launched a new spy satellite to strengthen its surveillance across the Middle East.

Defence Minister Israel Katz said on Wednesday that the satellite, launched on late Tuesday, will enhance Israel's ability to collect images like the 12,000 gathered over Iran during the 12-day war earlier this year.

Israel also gains reconnaissance capabilities in other parts of the Middle East as it conducts what Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has called a "seven-front war," with Israeli forces striking targets in Lebanon, Syria, Yemen and Iraq throughout the 23 months of war in Gaza.

24 people were killed in Israeli attack in Gaza on Wednesday, while 6 people starved to death in the enclave

ISRAEL ATTACKS UN IN LEBANON

Israeli drones dropped four grenades close to UN peacekeepers in southern Lebanon near the border with Israel as they were working to clear roadblocks.

No one was hurt in the attack.

The peacekeeping force known as UNIFIL described the Tuesday morning incident as "one of the most serious attacks on UNIFIL personnel and assets". *—PTI/ANI*

AFGHAN DISASTER

Time runs out to find quake survivors

JALALABAD, 3 SEPT

The United Nations warned of an exponential rise in casualties from a major earthquake in eastern Afghanistan, as the Taliban said the death toll passed 1,400 on Tuesday, with more than 3,000 people injured.

Sunday night's powerful 6.0 magnitude earthquake struck several provinces, flattening villages. It was followed by a 5.2 magnitude earthquake on Tuesday.

Rough terrain is hampering rescue and relief efforts, forcing Taliban authorities to air-drop commandos to evacuate the injured from places where helicopters cannot land.

Aid agency Save the Children said one of its teams walked for over 19kms to reach villages cut off by rock falls, carrying medical equipment on their backs.

People clear rubble as they search for survivors in Mazar Dara, Kunar province, in Afghanistan on Wednesday *PHOTO: PTI*

Indrika Ratwatte, the UN's resident coordinator for Afghanistan, said rescuers are scrambling in a "race against time".

It is the third major earthquake since the Taliban seized power in 2021.

"Based on what has happened before, there's no question that the casualty rate is going to be rather exponential," he said.

Help for Afghanistan is in short supply. UN official Kate Carey, said more than 420 health facilities had closed or were suspended due to the "massive reduction" in funding, with 80 of them in the eastern region, the heart of Sunday's quake. *—PTI*

Russia launches 500 drones at Kyiv

KYIV, 3 SEPT

Russia launched over 500 drones and two dozen missiles at Ukraine overnight, Ukrainian authorities said on Wednesday, as President Volodymyr Zelenskyy pushed for stronger European support and renewed US-led peace efforts.

The strikes targeted civilian infrastructure, especially energy facilities, mainly in western and central Ukraine, leaving at least five people injured, according to Ukraine's air force. Zelenskyy warned of escalating daytime drone attacks and a buildup of Russian forces along sections of the 1,000km frontline.

Despite US President Donald Trump's ceasefire proposals, Moscow has resisted peace talks. Zelenskyy accepted Trump's offer for direct talks with Vladimir Putin, but the Kremlin raised objections. *—PTI*

PHOTO: FREEPIK

Rupee recovers by 9P, close at 88.06 against USD

MUMBAI, 3 SEPT

The rupee recovered 9 paise from its all-time low level to settle at 88.06 (provisional) against US dollar on Wednesday, on positive domestic equities, softening of crude oil prices and weak US dollar index. Forex traders said the rupee is trading near all-time low levels amid persistent foreign fund outflows on the back of ongoing trade tariff concerns between India and the US. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened at 88.15 against the US dollar, then fell to an intraday low of 88.19 and a high of 87.98 against the American currency. The domestic unit finally settled for the day at 88.06 (provisional), higher by 9 paise over its previous closing. *—PTI*

M'rashtra exempts EVs from paying toll on 3 highways

NEW DELHI, 3 SEPT

From 21 August, electric vehicles are exempted from paying toll tax on the Atal Setu, Mumbai-Pune Expressway, and the Samruddhi Highway, as per a Maharashtra government notification. Transport Minister Pratap Sarnaik said the exemption, under the Motor Vehicle Tax Act 1958, applies to all EVs, including four-wheelers (M2, M3, M6) and electric buses operated by both state and private players. Effective 22 August, 2025, the move aims to promote eco-friendly transport, boost EV adoption, and make road travel more cost-effective. The state cabinet also approved major metro projects, including Mumbai Metro Line-11, Pune and Nagpur Metro expansions, and two new stations on the Swargate-Katraj line, alongside funding for urban transport upgrades. *—ANI*

Zerodha fixes technical glitch after brief outage

NEW DELHI, 3 SEPT

Online brokerage Zerodha encountered a brief technical glitch on Wednesday morning, disrupting price updates for some users on its Kite trading app. The issue arose shortly after the securities market opened at 9.15am, with several traders taking to social media platform X to complain about difficulties in selling stocks and managing their positions. Acknowledging the problem, Zerodha issued a statement on X: "Some of our users are facing issues with price updates on the app. We're checking this. For now, please log in to Kite web on a mobile browser. Order placement is not affected. For the equity segment, you can also check 20depth on the app." By 9.51am, the brokerage confirmed that the issue had been resolved. *—PTI*

Govt to launch framework to reuse coal mines

NEW DELHI, 3 SEPT

The government will launch a financing framework to reuse the mines from which coal has been extracted on Thursday, according to an official statement. The framework 'ARTHA' will be released during the 'Star Rating Awards Ceremony for Coal and Lignite Mines' in Mumbai. The event will recognise coal and lignite mines across the country for their exceptional performance in operational excellence, environmental care, safety, and community development. A comprehensive practitioner's guide for responsible and sustainable mine closure will also be released. Union Ministers G Kishan Reddy and Satish Chandra Dubey, along with senior officials from the Ministry of Coal, representatives of coal PSUs, and industry stakeholders, will attend the event. *—PTI*

Service sector touches 15-yr high in Aug but inflation intensifies

PHOTO: AI

NEW DELHI, 3 SEPT

The Indian services sector growth touched a 15-year high in August, driven by a sharp rise in new orders and output, amid substantial improvement in demand conditions, a monthly survey said on Wednesday.

The seasonally adjusted HSBC India Services PMI Business Activity Index was up from 60.5 in July to 62.9 in August, indicating the steepest rate of expansion since June 2010. In the Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) parlance, a print above 50 means expansion, while a score below 50 denotes contraction.

According to the survey, a substantial improvement in demand during August pushed growth of new orders and activity to their highest rates in over 15 years. Moreover, the rise in international sales was the third-strongest since series started in September 2014.

"India's services PMI Business Activity Index reached a fifteen-year high last month, from 60.5 in July to 62.9 in August, on the back of surging new orders," said Pranjul Bhandari, Chief India Economist at HSBC.

Aiding the rise in total sales was a pick-up in growth of new export orders, the survey said, adding that panel members signalled greater demand from clients in Asia, Europe, Middle East and US.

On the price front, the rate of inflation quickened to a nine-month high. Meanwhile, demand buoyancy facilitated the steepest increase in output charges since July 2012.

Meanwhile, year-ahead expectations improved to a joint five-month high in August. Some companies also hope to be able to take on more work as a result of staff recruitment in recent months. *—PTI*

Tobacco, carbonated drinks to attract 40% GST

TVs, ACs, Bikes under 350 CC to fall under the new 18% GST Slab

NEW DELHI, 3 SEPT

The GST Council has increased the tax on super luxury goods under a special rate of 40 per cent. The tax on pan masala, tobacco products, cigarettes and all cars larger than 1,200 cc for petrol and 1,500 cc for diesel will attract 40 per cent GST. Motorcycles exceeding 350 cc and aircraft for personal use and yachts will also attract a 40 per cent GST rate.

The council, chaired by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, cut the current four slabs down to two, in a landmark move

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman during the 56th GST Council meeting, in New Delhi, on Wednesday PHOTO: PTI

Items shifted from 28 per cent to 18 per cent:

- All TVs (including over 32 inches).
- Air conditioners and dishwashers.
- Small cars.
- Motorcycles up to 350cc.
- Cement.
- Tractors and forestry machinery.
- Buses, trucks, ambulances, and three-wheelers.
- All auto parts

40 per cent sin and luxury tax slab: This new slab targets products considered harmful or luxurious:

- Pan masala, cigarettes, tobacco products.
- Aerated drinks with added sugar, carbonated beverages.
- Mid-size and large cars.
- Motorcycles over 350cc.
- Yachts and aircraft for personal use.

Finance Minister Sitharaman said all decisions were taken unanimously, with full support from state finance ministers. "States have recognised the need of the times in supporting these reforms," she said.

With the new two-tier structure, the government hopes to boost consumption by putting more money in people's hands while also simplifying tax compliance for businesses.

While opposition-ruled states have demanded that all states be compensated for the revenue loss they incur post the implementation of the GST rejig, the finance minister of TDP-ruled

Andhra Pradesh, Payyavula Keshav, said his state is supporting the Centre's GST rate proposals.

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah said that the proposed GST reforms could reduce the UT's revenue by 10-12 per cent, adding to the severe fiscal crisis as its public revenues have "collapsed" in the aftermath of the Pahalgam terror attack.

Karnataka, in particular, has estimated a potential annual shortfall of Rs 15,000 cr in the State's revenue, besides claiming it would affect its ability to run the state government. *—PTI*

2,624 STOCKS ADVANCE

Mkts bounce back amid optimism on GST meet

MUMBAI, 3 SEPT

Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty closed higher in a volatile session on Wednesday, driven by a rally in metal stocks and optimism related to the GST Council meeting.

After oscillating between highs and lows, the 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 409.83 points or 0.51 per cent to settle at 80,567.71. During the day, the benchmark hit a high of 80,671.28 and a low of 80,004.60, gyrating 666.68 points.

The 50-share NSE Nifty climbed 135.45 points or 0.55 per cent to 24,715.05.

The GST Council is meeting in New Delhi for two days to discuss the proposed pruning of tax rates to 5 per cent and 18 per cent.

Among Sensex firms, Tata Steel jumped the most by 5.90 per cent. Titan, Mahindra & Mahindra, ITC, Eternal, State Bank of India, and Trent were among the other gainers.

However, Infosys, NTPC, Hindustan Unilever, TCS, Adani Ports and Bharti Airtel were among the laggards.

Indian equities closed higher

PHOTO: PTI

after a mixed start to the session, buoyed by expectations of a consumption-led stimulus from the potential GST slab rationalisation.

The BSE smallcap gauge jumped 0.90 per cent and midcap index climbed 0.63 per cent.

Among BSE sectoral indices, metal surged the most by 3.08 per cent, followed by commodities (1.53 per cent), healthcare (1.20 per cent), consumer discretionary (0.80 per cent), financial services (0.73 per cent), bankex (0.71 per cent) and auto (0.71 per cent).

IT, teck, BSE Focused IT and utilities were the laggards.

As many as 2,624 stocks advanced while 1,484 declined and 162 remained unchanged on the BSE. *—PTI*

Gold hits new record high of Rs 1.07L/10g

NEW DELHI, 3 SEPT

Gold prices rallied Rs 1,000 to touch a fresh record high of Rs 1,07,070 per 10g in the local markets on Wednesday amid hopes of Fed easing rates, mounting geopolitical tensions and growing worries around the US economy.

According to the All India Sarafa Association, the precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had closed at Rs 1,06,070 per 10g on Tuesday.

In the Delhi market, gold of 99.5 per cent purity extended the gains for the eighth consecutive session, appreciating Rs 1,000, to hit a fresh record high of Rs 1,06,200 per 10g (inclusive of all taxes) on Wednesday.

It had settled at Rs 1,05,200 per 10g in the previous market session.

PHOTO: FREEPIK

In the international markets, spot gold climbed to hit an all-time high of USD 3,547.09 per ounce.

Meanwhile, silver prices traded flat at Rs 1,26,100 per kilogram (inclusive of all taxes). However, spot silver traded 0.11 per cent lower to trade at USD 40.84 per ounce in New York. *—PTI*

US judge orders Google to share search data with competitors

SAN FRANCISCO, 3 SEPT

In a major victory for Big Tech, a US judge has ruled that Google will not be forced to sell its Chrome browser or Android operating system, despite being found to hold an illegal monopoly in online search and related advertising.

The decision, delivered by US District Judge Amit Mehta in Washington, concludes a nearly five-year legal battle between Google and US antitrust regulators. While the judge stopped short of enforcing a breakup, he did order Google to share search data with rivals to foster competition and curb anti-competitive tactics.

Google's parent company, Alphabet, saw shares surge 7.2 per cent in after-hours trading, while Apple — allowed to continue receiving lucrative payments from Google to feature its search engine — rose 3 per cent.

PHOTO: PTI

The 226-page ruling acknowledged the rapid transformation of the search landscape due to generative AI, including conversational "answer engines" like ChatGPT and Perplexity. These innovations, Mehta noted, influenced his more restrained approach to imposing remedies.

Though he agreed Google had used unfair practices to maintain dominance, Mehta rejected the U.S. Justice Department's push to force a divestiture of Chrome, calling it "incredibly messy and highly risky."

The ruling prohibits specific tactics used by Google to drive traffic to its services and marks a shift in regulatory approach, shaped by recent AI-driven competition.

Google hailed the decision as a validation of its position, with VP of Regulatory Affairs Lee-Anne Mulholland stating the ruling "recognises how much the industry has changed through the advent of AI, which is giving people more ways to find information."

. *—PTI*

Disney to pay $10M fine for collecting children's data

WASHINGTON, 3 SEPT

The Walt Disney Co. will pay a USD 10 million fine to settle a Federal Trade Commission lawsuit alleging it allowed personal data to be collected on kids under 13, violating federal law.

The FTC said Tuesday Disney violated the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act, or COPPA, which requires kid-oriented apps and websites to get parents' consent before collecting personal information of children under 13.

According to the complaint, Disney failed to properly label some videos that it uploaded to YouTube as "Made for Kids." The mislabeling allowed Disney, through YouTube, to collect personal data from children under 13 viewing child-directed videos and use that data for targeted advertising to children, the FTC said. That's because, since the videos weren't labeled as being for kids, they included targeted advertising.

Representatives for Disney did not immediately return a message for comment.

Google, the parent company of YouTube, agreed to pay USD 170 million in a similar settlement in 2019. *—PTI*

Urban Company sets ₹1.9K cr IPO

NEW DELHI, 3 SEPT

Urban Company, the app-based beauty and home services platform, has set a price band of Rs 98-Rs 103 per share for its Rs 1,900-crore Initial Public Offering (IPO). At the upper limit, the firm's valuation stands at Rs 14,790 crore.

The IPO opens for subscription 10-12 September, with anchor bidding on 9 September.

The offering includes a Rs 472-crore fresh issue and an Rs 1,428-crore Offer for Sale by investors such as Accel India and Elevation Capital.

Proceeds will fund technology upgrades, cloud infrastructure, office leases, marketing and corporate needs.

Listing is expected on 17 September.

Shringar House of Mangalsutra Ltd has set a price band of Rs 155-Rs 165 per share for its Rs 401-crore IPO, an entirely fresh issue of 2.43 crore shares.

Funds raised will support working capital and corporate purposes.

Shares of Anlon Healthcare Ltd debuted at par on Wednesday at Rs 91, inching up to Rs 92. Its Rs 121-crore IPO was subscribed 7.12 times.

Meanwhile, Vikran Engineering Ltd listed at Rs 99.70, up 2.78%, after its Rs 772-crore IPO saw strong 23.59 times subscription.

Funds will be used for working capital and general expenses. *—PTI*

Promoter firms infuse Rs 3.9K cr in Jio Fin

NEW DELHI, 3 SEPT

Jio Financial Services Ltd (JFSL) on Wednesday said promoter group companies have infused Rs 3,956 crore in the company to fund expansion.

Board of Directors of the company allotted 50 crore warrants for cash at a price of Rs 316.50 per warrant members of the promoter group -- Sikka Ports & Terminals Ltd and Jamnagar Utilities & Power Private Ltd upon receipt of Rs 3956.25 crore, JFSL said.

Jio's IPO

Reliance Jio's much-awaited IPO is poised to be a mega event in the telecom sector, financial services firm CLSA has asserted.

With a strong subscriber base of over 500 million 4G/5G subscribers, Jio holds 42 per cent of the market share; it has a strong growth potential going ahead. *—Agencies*

'NO PROOF PROVIDED'

Jane Street appeals against Sebi's mkt ban

PHOTO: PTI

MUMBAI, 3 SEPT

US trading firm Jane Street on Wednesday moved the Securities Appellate Tribunal against capital markets regulator Sebi's order to impose restrictions on the hedge fund for market manipulations.

In the appeal, seen by PTI, Jane Street alleges that sufficient information and access to documents imperative for putting up a defence have been denied by the regulator and claims that a recent inspection by a Sebi department had concluded that there was no manipulation.

The Securities and Exchange Board of India, on 3 July, passed an ex parte interim order barring four entities of the hedge fund from accessing capital markets and imposed a penalty of Rs 4,843 crore.

In the appeal, Jane Street has sought to quash the Sebi orders, access to relevant documents and, as an interim relief, requested the tribunal to instruct Sebi not to take any further actions.

Jane Street said it has complied with all the directions in the ex parte interim order and deposited the purportedly impounded amount, after which Sebi itself lifted the restraint on it.

There was no reply from Jane Street to an email query about the appeal.

According to reports, SAT is likely to hear the appeal on 8 September, but the cause list for the day was not updated on the tribunal's website. *—PTI*

Global users flag outage of ChatGPT

SAN FRANCISCO, 3 SEPT

Several users globally are frustrated as OpenAI's Artificial intelligence (AI) chatbot, ChatGPT, has met with an outage issue since Wednesday morning, sources said.

According to sources, over hundreds users filed reports on Downdetector, a website that tracks the status of online services, stating the chatbot's outage. Sources said that over 500 users in India had reported the same issue on Downdetector, adding that the number of users facing issues went down to 42 after 3.30pm.

The report had around 85 per cent of users reported issues with ChatGPT, 13 per cent reported issues with OpenAI website and only 2 per cent had issues with Writing Coach, it said.

OpenAI has yet to give a statement, sources said.

It said that the AI chatbot was working fine for some of the users while others faced network issues, adding that both the mobile app and website versions were affected by the outage. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

CAFA Nations Cup: Defender Jhingan ruled out

HISOR, 3 SEPT

Star Indian defender Sandesh Jhingan has been ruled out of the rest of the CAFA Nations Cup matches after sustaining an injury during the team's 0-3 defeat to Iran here. The injury to the 32-year-old stalwart is a big blow to India as they take on a strong Afghanistan side in their third and final Group B match on Thursday. India is currently placed second in the four-team group with three points from two games after a thrilling win against hosts Tajikistan, which was followed by a defeat to Asian giants and world No. 20 Iran. Iran is leading the pool with six points following an all-win record. India's hopes of advancing in the tournament hinge on the match against Afghanistan. Defender Sandesh Jhingan had sustained an injury during India's CAFA Nations Cup 2025 match against Iran and has been ruled out of the remaining matches. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Cook bats for flexible new-ball rule in Tests

LONDON, 3 SEPT

Former England captain Alastair Cook has suggested that teams in Test cricket should be allowed to take the new ball at any stage within 160 overs, instead of the current rule that mandates a fresh ball only after 80 overs. Cook, who retired from international cricket in 2018, said the change would add flexibility and tactical depth to the longest format of the game. "A new rule I would add would be, how about, in 160 overs, you can take the new ball whenever you want? You have got two new balls for those 160 overs, and you can take that second ball whenever you want. *—PTI*

IOC restores Olympic solidarity funding to India after reforms

NEW DELHI, 3 SEPT

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has decided to resume its funding to India under the Olympic Solidarity Programme, a year after halting it, acknowledging the IOA's "corrective measures" to resolve internal disputes and governance issues. The Executive Board of the IOC had last year halted the yearly grant of Rs 15 crore intended for athlete development programmes in the wake of prolonged infighting, during which 12 Executive Council members of the IOA refused to ratify the appointment of Raghuram Iyer as the body's CEO, citing his high salary.*—PTI*

Pak skipper Fatima Sana hopes to emulate MS Dhoni

KARACHI, 3 SEPT

Pakistan women's cricket team captain Fatima Sana draws inspiration from India's World Cup-winning skipper MS Dhoni and aspires to become 'Captain Cool' like him, as she prepares to lead her side at the 50-over World Cup later this month. The Women's World Cup, scheduled to commence on September 30, is being co-hosted by India and Sri Lanka, with Pakistan set to play all its matches in the island nation following an agreement reached between the BCCI and the PCB. Pakistan, which remained unbeaten in the qualifiers held in April, will start its campaign against Bangladesh in Colombo on 2 October. *—PTI*

B'luru stampede: Happy moments turned into tragedy, says Kohli

Virat Kohli
PHOTO: PTI

BENGALURU, 3 SEPT

India and Royal Challengers Bengaluru batting superstar Virat Kohli has opened up about the 4 June stampede during his franchise's IPL victory celebrations here, saying "nothing in life really prepares you for the heartbreak" of 11 deaths on what should have been the happiest day for his side.

The tragic incident occurred when an estimated 2.5 lakh fans thronged the M Chinnaswamy Stadium to celebrate RCB's maiden IPL title.

"Nothing in life really prepares you for a heartbreak like June 4th. What should've been the happiest moment in our franchise's history... turned into something tragic," Kohli was quoted as saying by RCB on its 'X' handle.

"I've been thinking of and praying for the families of those we lost...and for our fans who were injured. Your loss is part of our story now. Together, we will move forward with care, respect, and responsibility," he added in his first elaborate comment on the mishap that led to widespread criticism of the franchise as well.

An official inquiry into the incident attributed the chaos to the lack of proper clearances and the overwhelming crowd, which surged in response to social media invitations sent out by the franchise.

Virat Kohli lone Indian player to give a fitness test in London

As most of the Indian players reached the National Cricket Academy in Bengaluru for their fitness tests, Virat Kohli remained the only active player to give his test in London, where he is currently residing with his family.

According to a report, Kohli sought special permission from the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) to undergo his fitness test in the United Kingdom. *—PTI*

Hockey Super4s: Korea holds India to a 2-2 draw

Mandeep Singh, Hardik Singh goals ensure a draw

RAJGIR, 3 SEPT

Led by Harmanpreet Singh was held to a 2-2 draw against South Korea
PHOTO: PTI

Mandeep Singh has hit his first goal as India successfully made it 2-2 against Korea in the fourth quarter of the Super 4 match of the men's hockey Asia Cup in Rajgir.

The match began with India taking a 1-0 lead after Hardik Singh hit an amazing goal. However, Jugraj's Sing mistake gave Korea a penalty stroke, through which they scored an equaliser. Later, the visitors also capitalized on a penalty corner and took a 2-1 lead. Earlier in the day, Japan defeated China 2-0 in their Super 4 match. All four teams will be facing each other once in the Super 4 stage. The top two will make it to the final. India made it to the second round after topping Pool A with three wins in as many matches.

Malaysia inches closer to final, Japan made to work for 2-0 win

On what felt like the least sweltering day of the tournament thus far, the 2025 Asia Cup roared back to life after a much-needed rest day. On Wednesday, Malaysia took the first step towards the final, while Japan started its journey towards a consolation fifth place.

In the first Super 4s contest, the high-flying Malaysians went up against a resolute China, which has turned out to be the surprise package of this tournament. The Chinese were quick to come off the blocks and take the attack to the Speedy Tigers. China earned two penalty corners (PC) in the first 15 minutes but failed to convert. It kept the pressure on Malaysia in the second quarter, but once again failed to convert the chances.

After a lengthy referral, Malaysian skipper Marhan Jalil and Yuanlin Lu of China were shown yellow cards and given 10-minute suspensions for the fracas.

Indian hockey team now has a deeper understanding: Paddy Upton

Following a disappointing performance at the 2023 World Cup on home soil, the Indian men's hockey team made a remarkable comeback, winning gold at the Asian Games and a second consecutive Olympic bronze at the Paris. This turnaround was significantly aided by mental conditioning coach Paddy Upton, known for his Midas touch in sport. However, Craig Fulton's team recently faced another slump with seven consecutive losses in the European leg of the FIH Pro League 2024-25. Now, with a spot in next year's World Cup on the line at the Asia Cup 2025 in Rajgir, the team is once again looking to the South African to help it navigate high-stakes pressure and regain its winning mentality to end a five-decade-long medal drought. *—PTI*

DULEEP TROPHY

PHOTO: PTI

PHOTO: PTI

Shreyas, Jaiswal, Thakur eye big outing for West

BENGALURU, 3 SEPT

MATCHES START @ 9.30 AM

The dynamic trio of Shreyas Iyer, Yashasvi Jaiswal, and Shardul Thakur will be aiming to make a statement when a star-studded West Zone takes on Central Zone in the Duleep Trophy semifinal here on Thursday.

Iyer, who could not find a place in India's Asia Cup squad, will be keen to begin the season on a bright note here and keep himself in contention ahead of some crucial assignments such as the home series against the West Indies and the subsequent white ball tour of Australia.

This might be an incredibly frustrating phase for Iyer, whose 604 runs across 17 matches for Punjab Kings at an average of 50.33 and at a strike-rate in excess of 175 did not resonate with the selectors during the Asia Cup selection.

But if he can channelise that frustration and turn it into runs, the West Zone may benefit.

Jaiswal offers a slightly different case. Having already secured his place in the Test side for the foreseeable future, the young left-hander would want to sustain his red-ball game time ahead of the home series against the West Indies and world champions South Africa.

His last competitive outing was the fifth Test against England at the Oval, and since he is yet to crack the white ball code, Jaiswal might have to wait till the series against the West Indies in October for an international appearance.

On the other hand, Thakur, who is set to lead West Zone, will try to push his stocks up after lukewarm outings against England in the Anderson-Tendulkar Trophy to remain on the selectors' radar. *—PTI*

Khelif to miss world c'hips amid pending CAS appeal

DUBAI, 3 SEPT

PHOTO: PTI

Imane Khelif has the right to appeal World Boxing's decision barring her from events unless she undergoes genetic sex testing, but the Algerian is not competing at the world championships as she has not entered, World Boxing president Boris van der Vorst said.

World Boxing, which will oversee boxing in the 2028 Olympics, introduced mandatory sex testing for all boxers in its competitions in May, less than a year after Khelif and Taiwan's Lin Yu-ting won gold in Paris amid a gender-eligibility row.

However, Khelif appealed to the Court of Arbitration for Sport - sport's highest court - seeking to overturn World Boxing's ruling asking boxers to undertake a PCR (polymerase chain reaction) genetic test. *—PTI*

1ST T20I, SRI LANKA VS ZIMBABWE

Kamindu and Nissanka salvage a victory for Sri Lanka

HARARE, 3 SEPT

PHOTO: PTI

Kamindu Mendis' 41 not out off 16 from No. 6 rescued Sri Lanka from a collapse, and catapulted them to victory in a game that seemed to be slipping away. Sri Lanka needed 46 runs off the last four overs, having slipped from 96 for no loss to 125 for 5.

But Kamindu crashed four sixes and a four, the vast majority of those shots coming behind square on the leg side as Zimbabwe's seamers got their lines wrong at the death. In the end, Sri Lanka cruised home with five balls remaining and four wickets in hand.

Higher up the order, Pathum Nissanka struck his third half century of the tour to set the platform for this chase of 176. It was a competitive total given the conditions, with Brian Bennett's 81 off 57 balls being the primary driver of Zimbabwe's score.

Sri Lanka 177 for 6 (Nissanka 55, Kamindu 41, Ngarava 2-19) beat Zimbabwe 175 for 7 (Bennett 81, Chameera 3 for 30) by four wickets. *—PTI*

Indian boxers brace for stern test at World Championships

LIVERPOOL, 3 SEPT

Indian boxers will face a stern test against a top-notch field as they aspire to match or better their medal haul from the previous edition when the World Boxing Championships begin here on Thursday.

For the first time, the Championships will be staged under the aegis of the new governing body, World Boxing, and will feature both men's and women's events together. India enjoyed a successful run in 2023, with the women's team bagging four gold medals in New Delhi and the men clinching three bronze medals in Tashkent.But results dipped thereafter, with underwhelming performances at the Asian Games later that year and a disappointing campaign at the 2024 Paris Olympics. Although Indian pugilists returned with healthy hauls from the World Boxing Cups earlier this year. *—PTI*

Suruchi Singh claims No. 1 spot in latest ISSF rankings

DUBAI, 3 SEPT

PHOTO: PTI

PHOTO: PTI

Indian shooter Suruchi Inder Singh claimed the top spot in the women's 10m air pistol, according to the latest International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) rankings on Wednesday.

The 19-year-old has achieved this milestone for the very first time in her career, collecting 4162 points to finish ahead of China's Yao Qianxun with 3195 points. Double Olympic medallist Manu Bhaker is placed sixth on the list with 1988 points. In the 25m air pistol rankings, the 23-year-old is in fourth place (1800), with Esha Singh in sixth (1512).Sift Kaur Samra occupies the second place in the 50m Rifle 3 Positions Women with 3034 points, while Ashi Chouksey is in tenth (1277). In women's 10m air rifle, Elavenil Valarivan occupies fifth place with 2604 points. *—PTI*

Meso is named in SA's squad for women's ODI WC

JOHANNESBURG, 3 SEPT

Seventeen-year-old wicket-keeper-batter Karabo Meso on Wednesday earned her maiden call-up to South Africa's 15-member squad for the women's ODI World Cup starting later this month in India and Sri Lanka.

Meso, who debuted for the senior side against Sri Lanka in T20Is in March this year, has played two ODIs and five T20Is so far. She will be taking part in her first senior World Cup after competing in two U19 Women's T20 World Cups in 2023 and 2025.

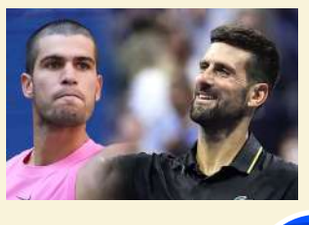
The squad doesn't include former captain Dane van Neikerk, who had earlier reversed her decision to retire. It was expected that Neikerk wouldn't find a place in the squad despite being included in the pre-tournament camp. *—PTI*

KARABO MESO
PHOTO: PTI

TENNIS US OPEN

Alcaraz to face Novak Djokovic in SFs

NEW YORK, 3 SEPT



Carlos Alcaraz finger-wagged the crowd, beat Jiri Lehecka to the net, and cruised into the semifinals at the US Open. The second-seeded Spaniard beat Lehecka 6-4, 6-2, 6-4 in the quarterfinals on Tuesday, making some highlight-reel shots and putting his hand to his ear afterward to encourage more cheers from fans at Arthur Ashe Stadium.

It's his first hard-court semifinal appearance at a major since winning his first Grand Slam title at the US Open in 2023. "I kind of met the Grand Slam version of Carlos," Lehecka said.

Alcaraz is just 22 years old and is in the semifinals at a major for the ninth time. Only Rafael Nadal, with 10, has more before turning 23. Next up for Alcaraz is Novak Djokovic, the 24-time Grand Slam champion who knocked him out of the Australian Open quarterfinals in January and beat him for the gold medal at the Paris Olympics last year.

Djokovic got past Taylor Fritz 6-3, 7-5, 3-6, 6-4 at night.

Alcaraz would supplant Jannik Sinner, whom he lost to in the Wimbledon final and beat in the French Open final atop the rankings, if he wins the U.S. Open for a second time.

On the women's side, Jessica Pegula broke through her quarterfinal wall again at the U.S. Open, defeating Barbora Krejcikova 6-3, 6-3 to get to the semifinals at a Grand Slam tournament for just the second time in her career. She failed to advance into the semis in her first 22 main draw appearances at a major before reaching the final at Flushing Meadows a year ago, when she lost to Aryna Sabalenka.

They'll meet again in the semifinals on Thursday after Sabalenka advanced in a walkover when Marketa Vondrousova withdrew because of injury. *—PTI*

Bhambri makes first-ever Grand Slam quarters

NEW YORK, 3 SEPT

Yuki Bhambri reached the quarterfinals of a Grand Slam for the first time in his career, progressing to the last-eight of the US Open men's doubles competition with partner Michael Venus here.

The 14th-seeded Indo-New Zealand combination knocked out the fourth-seeded German pair of Kevin Krawietz and Tim Puetz 6-4, 6-4 in one hour and 23 minutes.

They will next take on Croatia's Nikola Mektic and American veteran Rajeev Ram, who are the 11th seeds in the draw.

In his injury-marred singles career, the 33-year-old Indian could never go beyond the first round, but in doubles, he has been doing better.

He reached the third round of the French Open and Wimbledon this year.

All Indians out of the Junior US Open

Meanwhile, the promising Maaya Rajeshwaran Revathi gave a scare to second seed Hannah Klugman of Britain before going down in the girls' singles second round 7-6 (1) 4-6 6-3. She battled for two hours and two minutes. *—PTI*

Yuki Bhambri
PHOTO: PTI